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SUDDENLY THE RIGHT ARM OF HARRY WAS DRAWN BACK AND THE HARPOON
WAS RAISED IN AIR.

OR,
The Scapegrace of the Sea.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "OCEAN FIREFLY," "SEA RAIDER,"
"CABIN BOY'S LUCK," "BOY REFUGEE,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.
HARRY.

"My son, I am too poor to do anything for you, and you must help yourself now, and you have your choices of going out in the world to earn a living, or going to the University as a charity scholar."

The speaker was a clergyman, and his charge was a small country church in New Jersey.

The one he addressed was his son, a lad of fifteen, straight as an arrow, broad-shouldered,

handsome, and with a look of daring and resolution beyond his years.

The minister had been for long years pastor of the little village church, and his son Harry had been born there; but the boy's mother had died two years before, and just eighteen months after she had been laid in the churchyard, the Reverend Henry Harwell had married again, his second wife being a widow with four children, the eldest a boy two years the senior of Harry.

Harry had been the best boy huntsman in that part of the country; he had broken all of the wild colts for the farmers for miles around, stood at the head of his classes in the village school, and had once scaled the steeple of his father's church and mended the weather-vane, which had been broken in a storm of wind and hail.

He had a cool head, a generous nature, and was daring to recklessness.

All had gone well at home while his mother lived, and she had intended her boy for the navy, for the village was within hearing of the surf, and Harry had proven himself a bold young sailor in his short cruises with the coast fishermen, and he dearly loved life on the ocean.

But things changed when the second Mrs. Harwell took the helm at the village parsonage.

She had been the "Widow Jones," but changing her name to the aristocratic one of Harwell, she had also changed the names of her children.

Her eldest son had borne her maiden cognomen of Dooley, and was known as Dool Jones in the town where the widow had lived prior to her coming to dwell in the village where Parson Harwell dwelt; then it became Duke, and after her marriage, Duke Harwell.

A little property the widow had, with an income larger than the parson's salary, and this caused her to "put on airs."

Before she "caught" the parson, widow Jones was all sweetness to Harry, his son; but after she became Mrs. Harwell, the boy knew what it was to have a step-mother who had children of her own, and his lot was not a happy one.

Ruled by his wife, the poor parson had been forced to tell Harry what he did, in the words that open this story.

"Duke Harwell," it had been decided, was to go to the navy, and the widow had urged that Harry should go to a New England academy, where his father had been educated, or go elsewhere and earn his living.

With her to urge, was to command—and so the poor minister yielded.

"Father, I had hoped to go into the navy, sir, for it was mother's wish," the boy said, with tears in his eyes.

"Ah, yes, Harry, it was; but your mother is dead now, and consequently does not know what is best for you at this age, and your present mother—"

"Father, I hold the name of my mother sacred, so don't call that woman by that name. She is your wife, yes, father, but never my mother!"

"Why, my son, you are getting really impertinent to your father, as your mother—I mean my wife says, and you must go away, so what will you do?"

"Is a charity scholar greatly despised, father?"

"I was a charity scholar, my son," said the parson, with dignity.

"Well, sir, as I wish to get an education, I will go to the academy."

"You can go up to New York and take a schooner up the coast, to the nearest town, and you can walk from there."

"The schooner will be cheaper, you know, than the stage, and my wife says you can save your meals that way while you might be able to work your passage."

"I am willing, father; but will I not need some money at the academy?"

"Yes, I will allow you a dollar a week, which will get your clothes, books, and pay for your washing; but your mother—"

"Father!"

"My wife thinks that fifty cents should do you, and you might make a little for yourself by doing small chores."

"I'll do all I can, father, and if I can get along without the liberal allowance you make me I will," and poor Harry really thought that it was liberal.

"You are a good boy, Harry, and I hope you will make a great preacher some day."

"I'd rather be a raider, father," was the honest response, and Harry set about getting ready for his going out into the great, cruel world to fight for fame and fortune.

CHAPTER II.

THE STAGE DRIVER'S FRIENDSHIP.

WITH his carpet-bag on his back, packed with all of his worldly goods, Harry Harwell left his boyhood home early one morning, and started upon his tramp to New York, for he preferred to save his money—just twenty dollars—and walk, rather than take the stage coach, which would cut down his limited fortune, for it seemed a large sum to the boy, innocent of the world's ways.

His heart was full, but he kept a brave face, and trudged away, waving his cap as he went over the hill out of sight.

As home and the village was shut out of his view, perhaps forever, he halted. The tears came to his eyes, and turning, he ventured along the hill path toward the little village church, which stood upon a hill overlooking the little town.

Leaping over the wall he passed rapidly to where there was a new marble slab at the head of a grave.

On it were the words:

"In memory of

MARTHA HARWELL,

WIFE OF REV. HENRY HARWELL.

Died May 1st, 18—.

Asleep in Jesus."

By this grave Harry dropped upon his knees and burst into tears.

"Oh, mother! if you had not died, I would not be driven from home."

"I am going far away, mother, and I may never come back, but I'll never forget your teachings, never forget your grave."

"Good-by. Good-by!"

He arose to his feet, waved his hand softly toward the grave as he walked away, looking back at it until he again leaped the wall.

Then he set his teeth firmly, and regaining the stage road walked briskly along.

The sun was up now, and all nature looked serene, the birds singing in the woods, as he passed along, and the brook gurgling with musical murmur as it hastened on to the sea.

Presently there came the rumble of wheels behind him.

It was the stage-coach he knew.

To him a stage-driver was a great man, and he had often longed for a ride in the coach, but had never been away from home, except on a cruise with fishermen.

"It is Dan Rawlings, whose whip I found and gave to him," said Harry, as he recognized the mighty man on the box.

The stage was rolling by when Harry looked up, the driver caught his eyes, and instantly the brakes were put on, and a stern "Whoa!" brought the four spirited horses to a standstill.

"Hain't you Parson Harwell's son?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"You are the boy that found my whip, hain't yer, and wouldn't take pay?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are you tramping?"

"To New York, sir."

"Get right up here alongside o' me."

"I can't afford to ride, sir, for I've got a long way to go, and—"

"I didn't ask you to pay—so up with you, my boy."

Harry scrambled up with joy.

"Your name is Harry, hain't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are the boy that fixed the weather-vane on the steeple?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wouldn't have gone up there for money."

"I didn't mind it, sir."

"I'd have fallen, and buried myself right there in the graveyard; but you are the boy that captured the burglar who was stealing the silver communion service?"

"Yes, sir; father had left his spectacles in the vestry, and missed them at night when he went to bed, so I went after them for him, and I saw through the windows the man opening the silver box, which is kept in the vestry closet."

"I had the church key, and so ran around, determined to scare him, and took the white sheet over the velvet altar-cloth, and putting it around me, stood in the door, for I saw a window open in the church, and knew the man had gone in that way."

"I held out my hand, and kept still, and he turned and saw me."

"He gave a cry and fell down in a faint, and I ran over to Squire Harkins, and when he got

back with me the man was just coming to, so we caught him."

Dan Rawlings laughed heartily at the fright of the robber, and said:

"You've got nerve, boy, for I wouldn't go into that church, with the graves all about it, after the sun set, for money."

"Would you be afraid, sir?"

"I would, for I don't like graveyards; but your father has married again, they tell me?"

"Yes, sir."

"I don't get much gossip, as I only stops for dinner in the village as I passes through, but I heard your father preach once."

"Yes, sir, I'm glad you did."

"He's uncommon long-winded, and I went to sleep; but his text were a good one, though I disremembers it now."

"Yes, sir; father always is careful to pick out a good text."

"Yes, some parsons go in stronger on a text than they do on a sermon; but your step-mother were the widow Jones, wasn't she?"

"Yes, sir."

"She lived in the town at the end of my run, afore she moved to the village?"

"Yes, sir."

"She's a terror, hain't she?"

"You mean she is cross?"

"Well, she's all that, for I brought her and her kids to the village, and they had three regular fights inside, and the old lady made me stop four times to get switches to larrup them with; and when I wanted to help her out by taking a hand in and lickin' thet big noodle boy of hers, she sailed into me tooth and nail, and I climbed skyward, I can tell you, and durned ef I didn't think she were a-going to mount arter me."

"But I shoo'd her off and drove on, and when we got to the village an old man, who was a passenger, said he'd never seen quite such a time in his life, and he was vergin' on to seventy years."

"If your father had rid over with us that day, Harry, she'd never have been your step-ma."

"I wish that he had," was the honest remark.

"I guess she keeps the house lively for the old man, and likes as not, she has drove you off."

"She thought I'd better go, and I'm going to an academy away up in New England."

"No!"

"Yes, sir; and I take a schooner at New York to the nearest town, and walk the rest of the way."

"Well, now; but do they intend to make a preacher out of you?"

"Father wishes it."

"It hain't right, for you has it in you to make a man, and there's lots o' poor timber 'round they can make parsons out of; but you found my whip for me once."

"Yes, sir; I was out with my gun, and crossing the road, found it."

"Here it is, and I value it high, for it was given me by the town's folk when I had made my twenty-five years on the road."

"It was made up in the city o' York and cost a pile o' money, for the handle is gold-mounted and has my name on it; and I'm obleeged to you, Harry, I am indeed."

And so they talked on, Harry taking his first lesson in driving four horses, and keeping the reins until they drove into the city at sunset.

That night Dan Rawlings took the boy to his room in the inn, and the next day went down to see his brother, who was mate on a packet-schooner running to Boston.

The vessel was going to sail that day, fortunately for Harry, and he got a berth on board to work his way, with a promise from Mate Rawlings to look after him.

"The boy's my friend, Jake, so be good to him," said the honest driver, and he handed a sealed letter to Harry, with the remark:

"Now here's a bit o' advice, my boy, for you to read when you get to the 'cademy, and do as old Dan Rawlings tells you in it."

"It may not be writ well, for I hain't no scholar, but it's meant well, so put it with your traps and then we'll go and have a look at the big city, for we've got some hours afore the schooner sails, and I don't drive on my way until sunset."

The city was a fascination that Harry could not resist, and he returned on board the schooner with his brain full of the wonders he had seen.

Bidding good Dan Rawlings good-by, he sprung to work with the seamen, and as the little vessel sped on its way up the East river, and toward the Sound, the boy's heart fell, for he felt that the great future was before him, and what would the end be he wondered.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOY LIFE-SAVER.

THE schooner upon which Harry Harwell shipped for the run to Boston was a most comfortable-going packet-vessel between New York and Eastern ports.

She had a large cabin, high poop-deck, and accommodations for a dozen passengers, while Captain Tate, her skipper, was known to be a thorough seaman, and set a table that delighted all who sailed with him.

The captain was on the poop-deck, conversing with a stout gentleman of fifty, who looked like a rich shipping merchant, and saw Harry Harwell spring to work with a will, and in a way that showed he knew what he was about, for his practice on the fishing-schooners had given him a pretty good knowledge of what he had to do. "Who is that boy, Mate Rawlings?" asked Captain Tate.

"A lad, sir, who is a poor preacher's son down in Jersey, and is going up to school in Massachusetts."

"He is a friend of my brother Dan, and he brought him aboard and asked me to let him work his way, and thus save his cash, and I did."

"He's a likely lad, and I'm glad you gave him a berth; but be light on him."

"I will, sir," and the mate turned to his duties, while the captain and his passenger watched the boy sailor.

"Now, my son, look at that young fellow. He is younger than you are, and yet a good sailor, and has it in him to make a man of himself," said the stout gentleman, addressing a boy who just then came on deck.

He was a youth of seventeen, stylishly dressed, and had an affected, haughty air.

He looked scornfully at Harry and said in a drawing way:

"Every boy will make a man, father, if he lives long enough; but I will make a gentleman, and that is what common people can never become."

"Ralph, you have become terribly spoiled, and I shall have to take you in hand," said Mr. Radcliffe, making his usual threat which he never carried out.

No more was said about Harry, and the schooner sped on, the beautiful evening luring the passengers on deck.

Under a skillful pilot, the schooner shot into the wild waters of Hell Gate, a ten-knot breeze driving her briskly along.

Up into the Sound she went, when suddenly, out from Flushing Bay came a schooner, which at once caused a scene of excitement on board the packet, and the captain crowded on every stitch of canvas that would draw.

"You are afraid of that fellow, Captain Tate," said Mr. Radcliffe, anxiously.

"Yes, sir, I am, for there has been an ugly pirate of late in these waters, and he's done a great deal of damage."

"He's got long-range guns and a fast craft, but I doubt if he can catch the Flyaway, for my schooner's a fleet one, Mr. Radcliffe."

"So I have always heard, Captain Tate, and I hope she'll keep up her reputation now," and turning to his son the merchant said in a whisper:

"Ralph, that craft is a pirate."

"Oh, father, will he kill us all?"

"I hope not, my son, but he is chasing us, as you see—ah! he fires!"

A shot came flying over the Flyaway's decks, and sunk in the sea beyond.

It was bright moonlight, and the stranger was now distinctly seen, not a mile distant, while his shot proved that he was in earnest.

But Captain Tate held on, having no intention of obeying the brazen-mouthed summons of the former to heave to.

In a moment more a second shot came, then a third, a fourth, and the fire was kept up rapidly.

One shot cut through the bulwarks amidships, and Ralph Radcliffe disappeared down into the cabin with a celerity that was ludicrous, and Harry, who was near and saw him, broke forth in a laugh.

The laugh reached the flying boys ears, but did not stop him, while his father frowned and said:

"That boy is insolent, sir!"

Captain Tate had heard the laugh and seen the cause, and he laughed also, while he replied:

"That boy's got nerve, Mr. Radcliffe, to see anything funny with death staring him in the face, for the ball hit nearer to him than it did to Master Ralph; but that fellow is getting in earnest," and the fire grew hotter and hotter.

"We are outsailing him, sir," said Harry, politely.

"By Neptune, but you are right, my boy, and I had not observed it before."

"He's a cool one, Mr. Radcliffe," and the skipper again turned to the merchant, just as a shot came whizzing aloft and cut the maintop-mast in two.

It fell, but, upheld by the stays, swung and pitched about at a fearful rate, threatening to come down on deck and do a great deal of damage, if not take life.

"Up aloft there, lads, and pull that spar in, before we have it on deck!" cried the captain in a loud voice.

Not a seaman moved, and then up the ratlines went Harry Harwell.

"It is that boy! But can he do it?"

"After him, a couple of you, and help him; but look out that you are not killed by it!" shouted Captain Tate.

But the seamen knew well the danger, with the spar flying about, and the boy did not, and they did not obey.

In the mean time the brave boy had reached the cross-trees, narrowly escaping death from the swinging spar, which he dodged most cleverly, and, catching the stay, with the aid of a rope, fished it in, when a couple of seamen sprung up the rigging and completed the work by lowering it to the deck.

Just then another shot cut one of the men from his hold, and he fell lifeless to the deck, his comrade springing down after him in his fright, and fracturing his leg in his fall, while Harry Harwell coolly descended from his perch, as though not in the slightest danger.

"Bravo, my boy! You have done what it seems the men of my crew dared not do, and I'll not forget you," and Captain Tate grasped the boy's hand, warmly, while Mr. Radcliffe advanced and said:

"Yes, my boy, you are very brave, and, though I do not like your laughing at my son, whose nerves are not as strong as yours, I like to encourage you and give you this," and he handed out a gold eagle to the boy.

"Thank you, sir, but I do not accept money," was the reply, and Harry walked back to his post; but the captain soon after called him and said:

"You were right, my boy; we are dropping the pirate rapidly, and we'll soon be out of range."

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name, lad?"

"Harry Harwell, sir."

"Do you wish to make a sailor?"

"Yes, sir, after I have gone through the academy."

"Well, you must keep me posted of your movements, and come to me if you want a friend."

"Now you have earned your passage on this craft, and there's a state-room down in the cabin for you, as I'm not crowded, so you will stay there."

"I thank you, sir, but I had better stay forward."

"Not a bit of it, for you eat and sleep in the cabin!"

Thus it was settled, and Harry was delighted at his change of quarters.

The Flyaway soon after ran out of range of the fire of her pursuer, the chase was given up, and without further peril she arrived off Boston Bay one dark night of rain.

Suddenly ahead loomed up a dark object, shouts of warning were heard, but too late; a crash came, a severe shock and the Flyaway had collided with a large sloop that had no lights up.

The wind was light, or both vessels would have gone down, but the shock was a heavy one, and a form leaning over the taffrail, in the fearful lurch of the Flyaway, had gone overboard, a wild cry breaking from his lips.

"Man overboard!" shouted Captain Tate, above the confusion, and instantly a slight form leaped upon the bulwarks and plunged overboard to the rescue.

The two vessels had now drifted apart, neither much damaged; a boat was hastily lowered, and in despair and grief Mr. Radcliffe waited, for it was his son who had been thrown into the sea by the shock.

"Hereaway!" shouted a clear young voice out in the darkness, and the boat, with a man in her bow holding a lantern, rowed toward the spot from whence came the sound.

"Who was it that went to the rescue?" cried a passenger.

"That gallant boy, for it was his voice, and he is not on deck," answered Mate Rawlings, as though there had been but one boy on board the schooner.

"The boat has reached him!" cried a seaman.

"Have they got my boy on the boat, sir?" asked the alarmed merchant, as it came swiftly toward the schooner.

"Ho that boat!" called out Captain Tate.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Did you get them both?"

"Yes, sir," came the answer of the second mate.

A moment more the two boys were on deck, Ralph Radcliffe very white and silent, Harry very cool, and indifferent, while he said to Captain Tate:

"I heard him say one day he could not swim, so I jumped after him."

"You are a gallant boy, and some day you'll be heard from," was the answer, and Captain Tate continued his duties in looking after the vessel, and, as neither were greatly injured, they parted company and the schooner ran on to her dock in Boston.

When Mr. Radcliffe came on deck, the next morning, he was told that Harry Harwell had gone ashore, to start on his way; but where was his destination no one seemed to know, more than that he had thanked the captain most kindly, bidden him and mate Rawlings good-by, and stating that he would start on his way to his school had departed from the schooner his little carpet-bag swung on a stick across his shoulder.

CHAPTER IV.

A TIMELY WARNING.

SEEKING a quiet inn Harry passed the day and night in Boston, bent on seeing the sights of the city, as he was anxious not to appear wholly a greenhorn among his fellow students.

The next morning, bright and early, after a hearty breakfast, he paid his bill and started upon the tramp to the academy, which was not very far from Gloucester on the Massachusetts coast.

He walked along at a brisk pace, swinging his carpet-bag from one shoulder to another, as if it grew tiresome, and at noon halted for lunch.

He had brought a substantial lunch with him, and, after a wash in a brook by the wayside, he ate with a relish, and then lay down for a nap.

Refreshed by an hour's sleep, he again started on his way, and just at sunset came to a gateway leading into the grounds of an elegant stone mansion.

He was very tired, and along the road ahead of him, which he could see for a long distance, he beheld no humble home where he could ask for a night's shelter, and he said:

"They would not let me stay all night, at a grand house like that."

He had put down his carpet-bag against one of the massive stone pillars of the gate, and was seated upon it, on the inner side of the wall, admiring the handsome grounds.

Suddenly he started, for he heard steps approaching, and then voices.

"There's the house, Nick," he said, and two men, whom he did not see, stopped near the gate, and were evidently gazing at the mansion.

"It's a tony place, Jack," said a second voice.

"I should say so, and the swag to be got there is immense, for the silver plate is in a closet off the pantry, the old lady's got diamonds and jewelry, she keeps in a box in her room, and the old man never keeps less than a few hundreds in his desk."

"And you know the whole locality of all, Jack?"

"Wasn't I valet to the old man for months, until he accused me of stealin' from him, and then I got mad and left."

"I guess the old man was right, Jack."

"Well, he wasn't far wrong, and if I hadn't left I'd have gone to jail; but he and his wife are to be in Boston to-night, and there's no one there but the young daughter and the servants, so if you say you'll help me, we'll make the haul."

"You've got keys, you said?"

"I have, to the desk, silver-closet and box upstairs, in the missus's room."

"I looked to that when I was there, and made 'em, for I tried to be a locksmith, you know, Nick; but I didn't get a chance to use 'em."

"Well, I'm in for it, on half-shares, Jack, and we'll go back to the boat and wait until late, and then make the haul," and the two men walked away, while Harry Harwell, peeping around the gate pillar, saw them disappear down the road.

He had hardly dared to breathe while they were there, but now he shouldered his carpet-bag, and walked rapidly toward the mansion.

It was twilight when he ascended the broad steps of the piazza, just as a pompous servant appeared, coming out of the front door.

Harry was travel-stained and weary, his clothes were homespun, and the eye of the liveried butler was upon him.

"Come, come! get out of this, for we have nothing to give to beggars!" said the butler.

Harry was angry, and also hurt, and he replied:

"I am no beggar, sir, for I have come to—"

"I know, you are going to tell the same old story, so begone, and quick, too!"

"Richards, how dare you speak thus to that poor boy?"

"My father shall hear of this," and a young girl of twelve came out upon the piazza, her eyes flashing with anger as she turned them upon the butler, who now shrunk back crestfallen.

She was a beautiful child, merry-faced and golden-haired, and she held in her hand a bunch of roses she had just gathered.

"Miss Nellie, we have to be particular, you know, and—"

"Silence, Richards!" and she stamped her little foot, and then turned to Harry, who said, earnestly:

"I am no beggar, miss, for I have plenty of money with me, and am on my way to school; but I was resting at your gate, and two men came up, and not seeing me, began to talk of robbing your home to-night, and I just came in to tell you."

"Now, Richards, do you see?" and the maid turned to the discomfited butler, while she continued:

"Two men intend to rob our house, you say?"

"Yes, miss, and one of them was called Jack, and he said he had been your father's valet, and had left because he was caught stealing, while he said he had made keys for your father's desk, your mother's jewelry box, and the silver closet, and they were to come to-night and rob the house, as he said your parents were away from home."

"It is that bad man Jack, Richards, that father sent away."

"And you are so good to come and tell us about it, and I know Richards is ashamed of himself for treating you as he did."

"I am, for a fact, young gentleman; I was too hasty; but what is to be done, Miss Nellie?" and Richards's courage seemed to be oozing out.

"I don't know, except we can sit up and let them know we are watching them," said Nellie.

"I think, miss, if you have a constable near, it would be a good thing to send for him, let them enter the house and have him catch them, for they'd be sent to prison then, and not worry you again."

"Miss Nellie, this young gentleman knows just what is to be done, and I'll send Bird over to the village after Constable Crane."

"No, I'll write a note to Constable Crane, Richards, and let Bird carry it, and he'll know just what to do; but what is your name?" and Nellie turned to the boy.

"Harry Harwell, miss."

"Well, Harry, my name is Nellie, Nellie Lonsdale, and this is my home, so you must come in, and Richards will show you to a room and we'll have supper together, for you look like a nice young gentleman."

Harry smiled, and said:

"I thank you, Miss Nellie, but I am a gentleman's son and my poor dead mother taught me not to disgrace my father, who is a clergyman."

"I thank you, indeed, I do, for letting me stay here to-night, for I am very tired."

"Now, Richards, you see?" and Nellie gave the butler another reproachful glance.

But Richards was ashamed of himself and wished to make amends, so took Harry's carpet-bag and led him to a pleasant room, while Nellie went off to write the note to Constable Crane, in the village a mile away.

"Now, sir, you will be most comfortable here, and I'll brush up your clothes while you wash," said the butler, and Harry was delighted with all about him, as he was shown, half an hour after into the dining-room where Nellie joined him.

The note had been dispatched by Bird, and with Nellie and Harry alone at the table, they enjoyed their supper immensely, while Richards took care to see that the boy guest wanted for nothing.

As they arose from the table Constable Crane and a companion arrived, and Harry told them all that he had heard.

Then the constable arranged his plans, and Harry, the butler and Bird the coachman were mustered in as assistants, the lights were put out, Nellie went to her room with the female servants, and the watchers waited the coming of the robbers.

An hour passed, a long hour to those waiting,

and then a key was heard going in the lock of the room in the wing which Mr. Lonsdale always kept as his study, carrying the key himself and keeping it locked.

This the man Jack seemed to know, and he gained an entrance that way.

The door swung open and two forms entered.

Then the door was closed, and a dark lantern was opened, revealing the midnight visitors.

In an instant, then, the constable and his assistant, Matt Bird, rushed upon them, while Harry and Richards had gone around, at the whispered order of the officer, to guard the door outside.

But the robbers, though taken by surprise, were not to be easily taken, a pistol-shot rung out, and the deputy-constable fell, severely wounded, while the two men bounded for the door.

But one was seized while the other darted outside to be confronted by Harry, for Richards had run at the pistol-shot.

Instantly the boy cried:

"Stop, or I fire!"

A pistol-shot was the answer, but the bullet missed its mark, and then Harry fired, the man being almost upon him, and with a knife in his hand.

The shot brought the robber down, just as Constable Crane bounded out of the door, a lantern in one hand, a pair of irons in the other.

"Ho, my boy, are you hurt?"

"No, sir, he missed me, but I hit him," and Harry's voice trembled at the thought that he had taken human life.

"You shot him dead, lad," said the constable, as he flashed the lantern in the face of the man, as he lay upon the ground.

"Oh, sir, I am sorry; but he had his knife and meant to kill me, for he fired first."

"Don't mind it, my boy, for you have done well; it is that rascally servant Mr. Lonsdale once had here, for I recognize him, and I have his partner fast, though he has hurt Bill Sykes my deputy, and Bird has gone for the doctor; but where is Richards?"

"Here I am, sir; but they did not come out of the front door, as I expected they would," said Richards pompously.

"If they had you would not have been there, Richards," remarked the constable dryly, and then he added:

"You had better call Bird and tell him to get the carriage, and I'll drive Bill right home, for the doctor lives next door to him."

This was done, the constable and Bird going with the wounded man, and the former saying he would return at once with a wagon for the dead robber and the prisoner.

"You stand guard, lad, until I get back," he said, and Harry sat in the doorway where he could see the prisoner and his dead companion, and holding in his hand the pistol which a vestryman of his father's church had made him a present of, and which had saved his life.

Richards had in the mean time gone up stairs to tell Nellie and the female servants of all that had happened, and he made himself out a hero also; but the constable soon returned and destroyed this illusion by giving honor where honor was due.

With such a brave defender in the house, Nellie and the house-girls did not fear to retire, as soon as the constable had driven off with the living and dead robbers; and when the young girl came down stairs the next morning she walked up to Harry and naively kissed him for his gallantry, saying:

"You must stay here until father and mother come home, which will be soon."

But Harry said he must go on his way, and seeing that entreaties were unavailing, Nellie said Bird should drive him as far as the town, where he could take the stage, and she would go too.

Harry was delighted, and, supplied with a delicious lunch which Richards had prepared for him, he entered the carriage with Nellie, and she drove him to the town, some ten miles distant.

Here she bade him good-by, telling him to be sure and visit them on his way home.

But Harry would not spend his money on stage fare, not knowing what use he would have for it, and, after dinner at the inn, again started on his way on foot, feeling that he was making rapid progress toward manhood in the ten days that had passed since he left his boyhood's home.

CHAPTER V.

A BOY AT BAY.

THE academy which Harry Harwell had been sent to attend was quite an institution of learn-

ing for that early day, though now it would be deemed little more than a large country boarding school for boys.

The Reverend Henry Harwell had there received his education gratis, for it was a church school, and boys studying for the ministry and ministers' sons were taken as charity scholars.

It was situated just outside of a small village on the coast of Massachusetts, and within sight of the Atlantic ocean, and accommodated several hundred students.

A few of these boarded in the village, others, sons of rich men, had their rooms in the academy buildings, and the poorer scholars slept in dormitories.

It was after school hours when Harry Harwell trudged across the campus, his carpet bag on his back, on his way to report to the president.

The boys were at play, and all manner of remarks were made to the poor new scholar, and not a word of sympathy.

As they were playing some games, one burly fellow purposely ran up against Harry, knocking him down, for he did not expect it.

A yell of laughter went up from all, and the boy started to seize Harry's carpet-bag, when he was struck a blow that sent him flat on his back.

Quietly picking up his carpet-bag Harry started on, when, mad with rage, the bully rushed upon him.

"Cut his spurs, Benton!"

"Smash him, Charlie!"

"Teach him a lesson, Benton," were the cries upon all sides, and the bully thus encouraged attacked the new scholar.

But he had reckoned wrong, for that slender frame was hard as iron, and Harry had seen too much hard work, and been too fine an athlete to be mastered readily, and Charlie Benton, though eighteen years of age, was whipped into submission in a very short while, and his victor went again on his way, though he bore evidences of the battle through which he had passed.

In this condition he arrived at the president's house and presented the letter from his father.

Had he been a paying student, he would have received a more cordial welcome; but as it was, the president said coldly:

"How is your father?"

"Very well, I thank you, sir."

"I am sorry he did not teach you not to fight, for I witnessed the disgraceful scene upon the campus, Master Harwell."

"Then you saw, sir, that I had to defend myself from a ruffian?"

"I saw you engage in a fight, sir; but, as you were not then a scholar I shall let it drop, and you can go now and register your name on the steward's books, and then report to one of the under teachers, who will tell you where you are to sleep."

Such was Harry's reception, and, with a full heart he went on his way in search of the steward and the place that was to be his home.

He soon found that functionary, a very important one, too, in the students' eyes as well as his own, and he was assigned a place at the "charity scholars' table."

Then he found an "under teacher," a graduated charity scholar himself, and was taken to a cot in the dormitory, which he was told was to be his quarters. At its head was a locker for his things, and putting them away, he locked them up and descended to the wash room, where he made himself presentable.

Then he walked out in the campus.

There were half a hundred boys there, but not one spoke to him, and he felt indeed like a stranger in a strange land.

Suddenly his eyes fell upon a familiar face, and his own lighted up with pleasure, for though he had not liked the one he then beheld he was like a drowning man catching at a straw, and one he had seen before as an oasis in a desert of strangeness to him.

"Ah Ralph! Ralph Radcliffe, you here?" he said, advancing toward the youth whose life he had saved, and whom he had not seen since.

"Who are you?" coldly asked Master Radcliffe, turning and staring upon the strange boy.

"I am Harry Harwell, whom you met on the schooner Flyaway."

"Don't you remember me, Ralph?" and Harry's voice choked up, as he saw the impatient stare.

"I have come here to attend school, and I do not know any one. I wish I was at home."

"You ought to go there, then. Are you a charity scholar?"

"Yes, for my father is poor."

"Then you are not of my set. I have been here two terms, this being my third, and I

never have associated with charity students, nor shall I break through my rule now; but, if you wish to make a dollar a week by blacking my shoes, brushing my clothes and looking after my room, I don't mind paying you that as a servant, for that's the way the charities get along, waiting on the rich boys. Say, is it a go?"

Harry Harwell was no fool, and he could understand an insult, as the reader has seen.

He had his mother's pride and spirit, and he was quick tempered, so at once he acted and without thought, for the insulter was one whose life he had saved.

Older than Harry, he was also larger, though effeminate looking, but this the Jersey boy did not think of, as he administered a rebuke with his fist squarely in Ralph Radcliffe's face.

The blow rung and the insulter went down, while Harry stood ready to face the consequences of his act.

But Ralph Radcliffe knew just what nerve his antagonist had, for he had seen him on board the schooner, and he was aware that his strength had been the talk of the seamen, and their admiration, so he arose, and wiped his bleeding nose, and said:

"You shall rue this, Harry Harwell."

"Don't threaten, but *act!*" was the ready response, and a number of boys laughed, and one came up and grasped Harry's hand, and asked:

"What's your name, gamecock?"

"Harry Harwell."

"Well, you've got grit, and I like you, for I saw you thrash Benton, and you knocked Radcliffe clean off his pins, and both got what they deserved, for both are bullies."

"My name is Calvin Cole, and you room with me, for I'll see the president about you, and my governor can buy the Bentons and Radcliffes, so I'll be listened to."

It was with a great effort that Harry kept the tears back, for this kind greeting, off-hand though it was, touched him.

"You're in luck, young fellow, when Calvin Cole takes you under his wing, for he's the mogul here."

"I'll offer my hand, too," whispered another student, approaching Harry, who said:

"Calvin Cole is very good, and so are you; but, isn't he a handsome fellow?"

"Yes, handsome as a picture, brave as a lion, generous, and stands no nonsense from any one, for he's wild, and the president lets him do as he pleases; but he's to finish this term, for he's nearly twenty years old, and he's going back to a sea life, for he was a sailor boy before he came here, his father being a rich ship-owner, who made his money privateering during the Revolution."

"Well, I like him," declared Harry Harwell frankly, and from that moment his position in the academy was changed, for he was taken to room with Calvin Cole, and the steward gave him a seat next to his new-found friend at the table, and life seemed more endurable to the Jersey boy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT.

As time passed on at the academy, a great feeling of envy sprung up in the hearts of some of the scholars against Harry Harwell, for his father had been a thorough teacher, and the boy was so far advanced that he distanced in all his studies those of his age, taking his place in the classes with the older youths.

He became a favorite with the teachers, and even the stern president softened toward him.

He had a little room adjoining Calvin Cole's large and pleasant one, and he took care of both rooms, blacked the shoes of his room-mate, brushed up his clothes, and did other menial work to pay his way as best he could, for Calvin allowed him so much per week for his work.

An occasional dollar came from his father, and that was all, while a letter arrived from his step-mother, telling him he need expect nothing more, and to work for what money he needed, as expenses were heavy at the rectory, for Duke was to be fitted out for the navy, and the other children had to go to school.

Harry knew that the small sum his father sent him was unknown to his step-mother, so he husbanded his resources all he could.

Although he was a charity scholar, the steward had a charge against him of fifty cents a week; then there was blacking to buy, his washing to pay for, his books to get, clothing, hats, and shoes—so that, figure as he might, he could not live under two dollars a week.

He had arrived with twenty-seven dollars, including the ten dollars which honest Dan Raw-

lings had inclosed in his "letter of advice," which advice was:

"Spend this bank-note, my boy, for Dan Rawlings's sake."

Books had taken seven of this amount, and other necessary purchases five more, so that he began on fifteen dollars.

"Just seven weeks' money," he said to himself.

But then he was making in odd ways, by menial duties, a dollar and a half a week, so he saw that he could get through the term in that way without debt.

"I'll hire out on a farm for the summer months, and that will give me another start for next term," he said, as he sat one night calculating his chances for the future.

The pluck and strength of Harry, shown the first day of his arrival at the academy, kept the students from imposing upon him, and, outside of his studies, he had shown himself the best swimmer and oarsman of the institution, while coast fishermen praised the skill with which he handled a sailing craft.

Thus the months glided by, the letters from home getting less and less frequent, and Harry began to feel that he was indeed being cast off by his father.

But he studied hard, worked hard, and struggled on, Calvin Cole still remaining his steadfast friend.

One day Ralph Radcliffe received a present from an uncle of a hundred dollars, and the handsome gift got at once noised about the school.

The next day it was missing, and there fell a cloud upon the students, for it was certain that one of their number had taken the money.

Ralph Radcliffe had left it in his desk in his room, and the money had been taken from there.

But who to suspect was the question.

At last hints were cast out that Harry Harwell could tell where the money was if he wished to do so.

Of course all heard this rumor except the one most interested, and straight to him one afternoon Calvin Cole went, and said:

"Harry, they say that you stole Radcliffe's money, and the one who started the story was Charlie Benton, and you must at once go and settle with him for it."

Harry turned deadly pale, while he gasped:

"He says that I stole the money?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Calvin! do you believe this?"

"No, and we will go and find Benton, for he is over near the beach, with most of the boys, playing ball."

Harry started for the beach with his friend, and they found half a hundred of the students in an open field playing games.

Their approach was observed, and as they drew nearer, a number of voices shouted:

"Thief! thief!"

"Benton was the first to halloo, Harry, for I noticed him," whispered Calvin Cole.

Harry Harwell was livid, but he walked straight up to Charlie Benton, and said:

"I hear that you accuse me of stealing Radcliffe's money?"

"I have heard a number say as much," was the response.

"You started the rumor, and you shall have to retract it and ask my pardon right here."

"I will, on conditions."

"Well?"

"That you submit to being searched, and, if you have not the money about you, I will ask your pardon."

"Very well, such are the conditions," said Calvin Cole.

But Harry drew back, and asked:

"Why am I suspected instead of others, and why should I be searched and not Charlie Benton?"

"Because the accusation rests against you, Harry, and you must submit," responded Calvin Cole.

Harry stood in silent indignation, and then Cole stepped forward, and said:

"If you refuse, Harry, it makes it worse for you."

"I do refuse, for I am a gentleman's son, and would be guilty of no mean act, let alone being a thief."

"You must submit, Harry, for your own sake," and Calvin Cole took hold of his jacket and, without resistance drew it off.

"No, no, this is terrible," said Harry.

"Come, it is getting dark, and you must obey me, Harry," Cole continued.

"No need to go further—*here is the money,*"

cried Charlie Benton, and he drew out of a torn place in Harry's jacket the roll of bills, with a string tied about them.

"Is this your money, Radcliffe?" asked Cole.

"Yes, just one hundred dollars, as I tied it up."

"You, then, are the thief," said Charlie Benton, in a derisive tone.

With the spring of a tiger Harry Harwell was upon him, and a blow upon the temple felled him to the earth, and he fell like one shot dead.

"Great God! you have killed him," cried Calvin Cole, bending over the prostrate form.

"Thief and murderer! seize him!" yelled a chorus of voices.

"Run! for your life, run!" shouted Calvin Cole, and he sprung before the boy.

White faced, trembling, despairing, poor Harry hardly knew what he did, and he bounded away, his fellow-students at his back like a pack of hounds.

Yelling, hooting, jeering, threatening, they pursued the terrified boy, and straight for the beach he ran.

Like a deer too he ran, distancing his pursuers, and almost disappearing from sight in the gloom.

"Back, all of you! you shall not catch him!" cried Calvin Cole, throwing himself before the crowd.

"Out of the way, Cole," cried a large youth, and he bounded on.

"Back, I say!" shouted Calvin Cole, and he raised his hand and it grasped a knife.

But the other was upon him, a short struggle followed, a cry of anguish, and Calvin Cole was a murderer.

Horried, all the students stopped an instant, and then came the cry from Charlie Benton:

"Don't let that thief and murderer escape."

Then on bounded a score of boys, once more in chase of Harry.

To the beach they pursued him.

Then he halted at the edge of the surf, glanced up and down the shore, then at his pursuers, and throwing off his shoes, he plunged into the breakers.

When the crowd of pursuers arrived he was out of their reach, riding the breakers, still swimming seaward, and almost lost to sight in the gathering gloom.

CHAPTER VII.

GUILTY.

THE blow that Harry Harwell gave Charley Benton did not prove fatal, as was believed at the time.

It knocked him senseless, and he was carried by a few of his fellow-students, who did not join in the pursuit of the fugitive.

He was taken to his room and the academy physician was called in.

"It is a narrow escape," he said, "and the blow may yet bring on brain fever and cause his death," said the man of medicine.

Then he was called to the side of another victim, Reuben Lang, who had been stabbed by Calvin Cole.

But he was dead, the knife-point having entered his heart.

Contrary to the advice he had given Harry Harwell, Calvin Cole did not fly after his act, but calmly submitted to being *taker* by his fellow-students.

He seemed dazed by his deed, but uttered no word, and calmly walked to the village to give himself up to the village authorities.

What had become of Harry Harwell no one knew, and he was reported as having been last seen a long way off-shore, still swimming seaward, and it was believed that he must have been drowned, for he had his clothes on all but his shoes and jacket.

Fever following his return to consciousness, Charley Benton became delirious, and began to rave, calling upon Harry to forgive him, for he had wronged him.

But how, he did not say.

He seemed to think that Harry was being hanged for killing him, and in his delirium he saw him upon the gallows.

"Oh, Harry, forgive me, for I did wrong, I know I did wrong!" he groaned over and over again, and those bending over him feared he would never recover, but must die.

In the village churchyard Reuben Lang was laid away, while from his cell window in the jail—which overlooked the scene—poor Calvin Cole witnessed the burial of the young man he had slain.

"So ends my ambitions, my hopes. I had anticipated making my name known in the land, and I have done so; but, ah! how different

from the fame I sought is the fame I have won," groaned the unhappy youth.

"I was horrified at the act of Harry Harwell, for never would I have believed him guilty of theft.

"But, when I bade him fly, believing that he had killed Benton, I wished to save him, guilty though he was.

"And yet, had I thought, I might have known he could not escape; but he has gone to his death, and Benton may die, and poor Reuben Lang is in his grave, while I am here, in a cell.

"I was mad when Lang rushed upon me, and he struck me several times, and so, in my madness, I struck the fatal blow, and the gallows will be my end.

"I meant it not; but I did it, and so must I suffer the penalty."

Thus mused the unhappy youth, as he gazed out of his cell window upon the bright sunshine.

For weeks did Charlie Benton linger between life and death, and then the crisis was passed, and he was pronounced out of danger.

Slowly he improved, and at last was able to go out, with his inseparable companion, Ralph Radcliffe.

Then, for the first time, he learned of the flight of Harry Harwell, his loss in the sea, the death of Reuben Lang, slain by Calvin Cole, and that the latter was awaiting trial for his life.

It seemed to impress Charlie Benton deeply, and he sat down upon a bench in the campus, and wept like a child.

"Brace up, Charlie, and don't be a baby, for you are not to blame," urged Ralph Radcliffe.

"I wish he had never come here to school," sobbed Benton.

"Bah! you could not help that.

"He came, and what has happened cannot be prevented, and you must nerve yourself to be a witness at the trial."

"Oh, Ralph! what must I say?" cried the youth.

"Tell the truth, as I shall."

"The truth?"

"Why, yes, for I will tell how my money was stolen, and how I spoke to you about it first, and that you saw Harry Harwell in my room, at my desk, and when accused, he refused to be searched, the money was found in his jacket, and he sprung upon you."

"Yes, I can tell that, I think," he replied.

And he did, for the trial was held soon after, and Harry Harwell was found guilty of theft, and Calvin Cole was proven guilty of having murdered Reuben Lang.

With Harry Harwell, as believed, at the bottom of the sea, no human punishment could reach him; but with Calvin Cole in prison, he was sentenced to be hanged.

"Hanged on November 1st, my twentieth birthday anniversary," he groaned, as he was taken back to his dreary cell; but before the court he had received his sentence without a word, or the tremor of a muscle.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE.

WHEN Harry Harwell plunged into the surf, he was almost desperate.

The accusation of theft against him, his having, as he believed, killed Charlie Benton, the yelling pack at his back, altogether was more than even his nerves could stand, and he threw off his shoes and plunged into the breakers.

He knew not what he was doing, hardly, and he looked for no escape from death, only to elude the mad rabble at his heels.

At home in the water, for he had never met his equal as a swimmer, he became more calm. Indistinctly he beheld the crowd upon the shore.

What to do he did not know; but at last he determined to attempt to escape, and he headed along the coast to an inlet in which he knew there were a number of the academy boats always kept.

Escape, but to go where? Such was his almost despairing question, and he could find no answer to it.

What little money he had in the world he had with him, some twelve dollars.

His books, his clothes, his pistol, which had served him so well at the Lonsdale mansion, were in his room at the academy.

With twelve dollars, shoeless, jacketless, the shadow of guilt upon him, of theft and murder, he must go forth in the wide world.

But whither? What to do?

Mechanically he swam along.

It was now dark, the sea was running high,

and he was several hundred feet off from the shore, and running along toward the inlet, where he hoped to get a boat, and in that make his way along the coast down to some port, where he could ship on board a vessel as a cabin boy, or foremast seaman.

It was a mile, nearly, to the inlet, from where he had gone into the sea, but he did not dread that, and, if he became tired, he could swim ashore and walk the balance of the way.

Suddenly he heard the flash of oars behind him, and turning beheld a boat almost upon him.

Instinctively he called out, and the oars were stilled, and a voice cried:

"Who are you, and where are you?"

"I am here, sir, swimming," was the answer, and a moment after he was dragged into the boat.

There were four oarsmen and a man in the stern, and Harry's first discovery after this fact, was that the oars were muffled.

"Well, lad, give an account of yourself?" gruffly said the man in the stern, as the boatmen resumed their rowing.

What could Harry say? He felt that he was caught; so determined to make a clean breast of it, and said:

"I am a student at the academy, sir, and I was accused of stealing some money, and they searched me and found it in a torn place in the lining of my jacket."

"You should have hidden it better than that!"

"I did not hide it, sir! I did not steal it!" indignantly said Harry.

"Ah! but they found it on you?"

"Yes, sir, and one of the boys put it there, I am sure, when I had my jacket off playing ball, that he might accuse me."

"I was so enraged at him, that I struck him, and oh, sir! I killed him!"

"The deuce you say! You must strike a hard blow!"

"I do, sir; but I did not mean to kill him, and when Calvin Cole told me Benton was dead and to run for my life, I did so, and sprung into the surf and swam out."

"My poor boy, you have had a hard time of it; but to kill a fellow with a blow, and swim out where we found you, shows you've got a good deal of the man in you, and we'll see that they don't catch you."

"Oh, sir, I thank you, for they would hang me for murder."

"Yes, after you had served your time in jail for stealing, you'd be strung up for murder; that is justice, you know; but we'll take care of you."

"Are you coast fishermen?"

"Yes, I guess we are; but are you not the young fellow they call Harry Harwell?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have heard of you, for you took the part of my little boy once, who went to the academy on an errand, and had the boys pounce upon him, because he was a villager."

"You helped him out, and walked home with him, for I remember you now."

"I remember it, sir," said Harry, recalling the incident, which was greatly to his credit, as he had befriended the poor boy against big odds and come off best.

"Well, lad, I am glad you ran across us, for we'll take care of you; but we have got to feel that you can trust us."

"You can, sir."

"Well, you are something of a sailor, I have heard, as you have gone out with the lads in their smacks, and they say you are a good one."

"I've seen considerable of sea life, sir, for a boy."

"Well, lad, I'll give you a berth on a little craft, a schooner that trades off this coast, and with the West Indies and Canada."

"I should like it, sir, very much, for I suppose I have to look out for myself now?"

"Yes, for you'll end your days if you go back to the village, or they find you," and the man at the tiller gave an order for the men to cease rowing.

Then they all looked about them over the dark waters, as though searching for some vessel.

The lights of the academy were visible, nearly a league away, and the glimmer of the windows in the village could be seen distinctly, for the boat was but little over a mile off-shore.

Presently an object loomed up in the gloom, and the keen eyes of the boy were the first to discover it, for he said:

"There is a vessel, sir, and it's a schooner."

"You are right, lad, and your pair of eyes are better than our five pair."

"I will soon know if it is the craft," he added, addressing the oarsmen, and he lowered over the side of the boat, toward the vessel, and in such a way that they could not be seen from the land, three lanterns.

One was blue, another red and the third green.

Almost instantly a blue lantern was seen at the mast-head of the vessel.

"Our craft, lads! Ah! there comes the long-boat, so we can go out," and the man looked astern, as Harry touched his arm and pointed in that direction, to where a boat was visible, much larger than the one they were in, and but a cable's-length distant.

Resuming their oars, the boat moved in once more, heading directly for the vessel, which now lay to upon the waters.

CHAPTER IX.

UNDER THE BLACK FLAG.

THE vessel, which had been sighted from the boat, as they drew near, Harry saw was a schooner, lying low in the waters, trim in build, and with lofty masts and very long spars, showing that it could spread considerable canvas.

No light was visible upon her, and the boat was hailed only when it was very near, and then in a low voice.

"Ahoy, that boat!" came the challenge.

"Red, blue and green!" was the response of the man at the tiller, and Harry wondered why all this mystery.

"Ay, ay, sir," was the answer on the schooner.

"Blue," said the steersman.

"All right, come alongside," came the order, and the boat obeyed.

Hardly were they on the deck of the schooner, when the second boat was hailed in exactly the same way as the first, and the answers were the same, and it, too, came alongside, there being ten men in it.

As the man at the helm got on board the schooner, he took Harry with him.

Harry saw fully two-score men on the decks, noted that the vessel was armed, and that the officer aft, whom his friend was leading him toward, was in uniform.

"Ho, Mercer, I'm glad to see you, and we have a good night for our work," said the officer, addressing Harry's friend.

"Yes, Captain Breeze, we have, and you are in time, for it's seldom we catch you our first night on the lookout; but I have here a young friend who is in bad luck, and I wish you'd give him a berth with you. He's a gentleman's son, was a student at the academy, and took my boy's part one day against a dozen; but he got into a scrape, killed a fellow student, was driven into the surf, and swimming out he met our boat, and I promised him you would take him with you."

"I will be glad to; but do you know anything of a sea life, my lad?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I can do a seaman's duties."

"Well, I'll talk to you after awhile, for there is work to be done; but you are wet, so go down into the cabin and I'll have the steward rig you out in dry clothes," and the captain turned away, while Harry went into the cabin.

When he came on deck he found three boats alongside, one of which had been launched from the schooner's deck.

This one was full of boxes and bales, and attached by a rope to the stern of the long-boat, which was also being loaded, as was the small one that had picked him up.

Soon the three boats were full, and the man Mercer said:

"We are going ashore now, lad, and I'll say good-by. The captain will see to it that you are taken care of, and when you return I'll give you the news about the affair at the academy."

"I'll see you again in a couple of months, so good-by, and luck to you, lad."

Harry felt as though he was parting with an old friend, and was very desolate at heart.

But the schooner now got under way, and when she was put on her course Captain Breeze called to Harry and said:

"Come into the cabin with me, lad."

The boy obeyed, and in the light from the cabin lamp he saw who was to be his captain.

He was a man of thirty, with full beard, a reckless face, bearing marks of dissipation, and wore an undress sea uniform.

The cabin was comfortably furnished, but nearly every article of furniture seemed to be an odd piece from some other set.

"What is your name, lad?" asked the captain in a kindly way.

"Harry Harwell, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"On the Jersey coast, sir."

"And attended school on the Massachusetts coast?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you had bad luck to kill a fellow student, for it will influence your entire future life. But what is done cannot be undone."

"I did not mean to kill him, sir, for I only struck him with my fist."

"You strike a good blow; but you write a good hand, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, I am said to."

"Good at figures?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll make you my bookkeeper, clerk, or, more properly speaking, purser. You can keep an account of cargoes taken and disposed of, pay the men their wages, and be very useful to me. You will bunk in the cabin here, and eat with me, and the men will treat you with the respect due an officer."

"You are very kind, sir."

"Oh, no, for you are just what I was in need of, as I hate books and figures myself, and you can do the work well, I do not doubt, and your pay shall be fifty dollars a month, with of course your share of the prizes we take."

"Oh, Captain Breeze! fifty dollars a month?" cried Harry.

"Certainly, and your prize money will double that."

"You are so generous, sir, and, if I was not falsely accused by my fellow-students, and had not killed poor Charlie Benton I could be happy," and the tears came into the boy's eyes.

"You must not be gloomy, my lad, for we all bear our crosses, though you have begun young, and carry a heavy one."

"And you are an American war-vessel, sir?" asked Harry.

"Who said so?"

"No one, sir."

"Did not Mercer tell you what my vessel is?"

"No, sir."

"Well, lad, you might as well know now, as at another time: you are on board a craft that combines both smuggling and piracy."

"A pirate?" gasped poor Harry, and he turned deadly pale.

"Yes, and you will do well to attend to the duties you will have to look after, for I keep all my men up to the mark."

"Oh, sir, I do not wish to be a pirate!"

"You had better be a live pirate, than a hanged school-boy."

"I cannot stay here, sir."

"You will have to, until my return, and then if you wish it, you can go ashore and put your neck in the noose awaiting you."

"I cannot be a pirate, sir."

"I do not ask you to be; but you must act as purser for the present, so let me hear no more about it, and to-morrow I will show you what your duties are. That state-room is yours, so go to bed, and you'll find ample clothing on board to fit you. Good-night!" and Captain Breeze went on deck, and poor Harry was alone with his thoughts, which were strangely stern and bitter for one who had not yet crossed the threshold of sixteen years.

CHAPTER X.

PIRATE JUSTICE.

It was a long time before Harry Harwell could close his eyes in slumber, so bitter were his thoughts, so deep was his grief.

He remembered his happy early boyhood at the old Jersey home, where his parents seemed happy, and he knew that he was.

He recalled the terrible sorrow he felt at his mother's death, and the gloom that had fallen upon his father and himself.

Then the widow Jones had come into the house as his step-mother, and her children had begun to bully him.

This had ended in his father sending him away, and how fearful the result, for he had become a fugitive from justice, and worse still, he was forced to serve upon a pirate craft.

But he knew there was no help for it for the present, and he determined to make the best of it, thus being the better able to make his escape when opportunity offered.

The result was that he at last fell to sleep, and never awoke until the steward called him to breakfast.

He felt the vessel bounding over the waves, saw his small state-room, and for a moment could not recall where he was.

Then all came over him, and with a deep sigh he hastily dressed himself and went out into the cabin.

The captain was there and greeted him pleasantly, and to his surprise, Harry really enjoyed his breakfast.

"After you've gotten your sea-legs on, Harwell, I will show you what your duties are," said the chief, and soon after Harry went on deck.

He saw that the schooner was a very trim craft, carried half a hundred men, and had two guns to a broadside, and a pivot eighteen fore and aft.

There was one thing about her rig that was peculiar, and that was the set of her masts, which seemed different from any vessel he had ever before seen, excepting upon one occasion.

This peculiarity was that her foremast was as far forward as though she were a sloop, and the mainmast was very far aft.

This gave an immensely long gaff and boom for her foresail, and as her masts were very tall, her spread of canvas was enormous.

To counteract the position of the masts, the bowsprit ran out to a remarkable distance, and her main-boom was of vast length.

"You seem to be observing my vessel with a critic's eye, Harwell," said the captain, who had observed the eyes of the youth taking in the schooner's points.

"Yes, sir; but there is one thing I cannot understand."

"What is that, Harwell?"

"That she does not sail faster in a good breeze than she does."

"What can you tell about her sailing?"

"I saw her sail one night."

"You did?"

"Yes, sir."

"When and where?"

"It was last August, sir, the latter part, and in the Sound of Long Island."

"I certainly was there at that time."

"Yes, sir, and you chased a packet schooner, bound from New York to Boston, one bright moonlight night."

"You recognize this vessel as the one who gave chase?" asked Captain Breeze, with deep interest.

"Yes, sir."

"You were on the packet?"

"Yes, sir, on my way to school."

"Where was this in the Sound?"

"We saw you broadside, sir, at first, and then I noticed your strange rig."

"Then you headed for us, gave chase, and opened fire, but did not catch us."

"But where was this?"

"You came out of Flushing Bay as we passed, sir."

"But we could not catch you?"

"No, sir."

"And that is why you think this schooner is not so fast as her rig should make her?"

"Yes, sir."

"The packet schooner was fast?"

"Yes, sir, very."

"My boy, you have told me a secret I half-suspected," and raising his voice the captain called out:

"All hands ahoy! Come aft here!"

The crew seemed surprised, and obeyed with alacrity, while Harry was amazed at the look upon the face of the captain, for it had become so stern and dark.

"Mr. Vasa, I wish you to come near me, sir," said Captain Breeze, addressing the second officer of the schooner, who was a dark-faced Spaniard, with evil eyes and a cruel look.

"Well, senior?" and the officer obeyed, the first and third officers also taking their positions near their commander, and all wondering what it all meant, as did Harry.

"Mr. Vasa, you will remember, sir, that, last August, we ran into a hiding-place on the Long Island shore, where we were to beach the schooner at high tide, and clean her hull, which was very foul."

"Yes, Senior Captain," the Spaniard replied.

"I took first officer Rodney with me, and left you in command, to attend to the cleaning of the hull, repairs, painting and all else to be done."

"You did?"

"I was gone some ten days, and returned to find nothing had been done to the vessel, other than a few repairs, and you said, on account of the stormy weather, you could not obey orders, and I had to risk the vessel there until she was put in perfect order."

"Such was the case, sir," said the officer in a low tone.

"Vasa, you know that you lie, sir, for during the time that first officer Rodney and I were ashore in New York, you were in chase of other vessels, and the captures that you made you divided between yourself, the third officer and the crew, and all of you kept the secret. Is not this true?"

The Spaniard turned pale but remained silent,

and the crew became very uneasy, the third officer hanging his head an instant in shame, and then saying:

"Captain Breeze, I acknowledge my guilt, for though I urged Vasa not to do as he did, I was persuaded and kept quiet, and know I did wrong, for, if I obeyed him at the time, I should have reported to you upon your return to the schooner."

"Reed, you have saved your life by your promptness; while you, Vasa, I now sentence to death, for my officers shall no more trifle with me than my crew."

"You, Reed, must be docked of all pay and prize-money for three months, and the crew, for keeping the secret, shall also not receive pay for that time, or a dollar in prize-money."

"Mr. Rodney, put that man in irons, for at sunset he shall be shot."

And Captain Breeze pointed to the doomed officer, whose face had become ghastly through fear, and his eyes were glaring with hatred at his commander.

As Rodney advanced toward him, Vasa made a sudden spring and darted toward Captain Breeze, who had turned away and was leaning over the bulwark.

A cry of alarm gave him warning, and he wheeled quickly, but too late, as the infuriated officer had leveled his pistol to fire.

In fact, he pulled the trigger; but just as he did so his arm was knocked up, and the bullet cut through his cap.

At being foiled the officer sprung upon his captain, to suddenly drop dead as a bullet pierced his brain, while Captain Breeze, still holding his smoking pistol, said sternly:

"Into the sea with that corpse!"

The order was promptly obeyed, and then Captain Breeze turned to Harry, and said:

"Harwell, your prompt action in knocking up that assassin's arm saved my life. I thank you."

And Captain Breeze entered his cabin, while the crew went forward, and Harry walked to and fro, meditating upon piratical punishment of disobedience in an officer.

Soon the chief came on deck again, and his face was serene as though nothing had disturbed him.

"Harwell," he said, pleasantly, "I will tell you why the schooner did not capture the packet that night."

"Yes, sir."

"She was foul, from want of scrubbing, her main-topmast was split, and she dared not carry sail on it, and, from all I can learn, about half the crew were drunk."

"But, under good conditions, no craft afloat can catch her, while I can overhaul every vessel I ever yet met on salt water, as you will have an opportunity of seeing."

As he watched the sailing of the Night Bird, Harry could see that she was moving very swiftly through the waters, and he said to himself:

"I'll draw a model of the craft, rig and all, and if ever I get a vessel of my own she shall be like this one."

The next day Harry entered upon his duties, as purser of a pirate schooner, and he found, to his surprise, that his boatman friend Mercer, was the leader of a smuggler band, and disposed of the booty brought him on stated occasions by Captain Breeze.

In fact, Harry Harwell began to get a very thorough insight into the wickedness of the world, and the inhumanity of man to his fellow-man.

But he was in for it, as nominally a pirate, and he had to make the best of a bad matter until such time as he could remedy it by making his escape from the schooner, which he was determined upon doing at the very first opportunity that offered itself.

CHAPTER XI.

AT THE HARWELL RECTORY.

The Reverend Henry Harwell sat alone in his study.

It was a cosy room, with its shelves of books, writing table, and cheerful log fire, sending forth a cheerful light and pleasant warmth.

The curtains were drawn close, and the clergyman sat in his easy-chair, his sermon for the morrow, which would be Sunday, just finished.

But his face did not wear a happy look.

The lines were growing heavier, there was a sterner look about the kindly mouth, and the gray in the hair was increasing.

"Poor boy! I wonder how he is to-night?"

"I will send him a five-dollar bank note tomorrow, which I got for that wedding; but, wrong as it is, I'll have to deceive Abigail about it and let her think I only got five, and not ten."

"I wish I dared send it all, but she would be furious, as she has such a temper."

"Ah! there is the supper-bell, and if I delay Abigail will scold."

He arose and went to the dining-room, where he found already seated his wife and her children.

He asked the blessing, and then helped all to the food before them.

"What about the wedding?" snapped Mrs. Harwell.

"Oh, yes, dear. Well, it was a great affair, and here is the fee," and he handed her five dollars.

"It should have been ten, or twenty even, from those rich folks; but this will help to get Duke's outfit for the navy."

"I wish I could send it to poor Harry," murmured the clergyman.

"Not a cent of it shall go to him, for he does not deserve it, as the president wrote that he had been engaged in several fights."

"He was attacked as a new scholar, Abigail, and that was long ago."

"There is no excuse for him," sharply said Mrs. Harwell, and rising, the poor, hen-pecked clergyman left the table, drawing a strong contrast as he did so between wife number two and the lovely woman who had first blessed his home.

After supper Duke went down into the village, and soon returned with the mail.

There was a letter from the president of the academy addressed to the clergyman, and when he broke the seal and read it, he groaned and dropping his head in his hands broke utterly down, sobbing like a woman.

"Oh, God! my boy! my boy!" he cried.

Into the room came his wife, but he did not heed her.

She had come to learn the news, for Duke had reported a letter for his step-father.

She started, as she saw her husband, glided forward and took up the open letter from the table.

She saw there that her step-son was a *thief*, and had nearly killed a fellow-student, while he was believed to be drowned.

"So, so, this is your paragon of honor," she sneered.

The old clergyman was upon his feet in an instant, and he turned upon her with a look of fury.

"Woman, you have read that letter?" he cried.

"I have read it all," she said, startled at his sudden outburst.

"Then you know that *my son*, not yours, is accused of being a thief, a would-be murder, and is supposed to be dead?"

"I do."

"Dead he may be, dead he shall be considered, for no one here will know to the contrary, as I shall say I have news that my poor boy was lost in the sea; but, woman, if a breath of rumor goes out against that boy, if this community know that he is branded as a thief, as an intended murderer, then, so help me High Heaven, you shall rue it to your dying day."

"Now go, and leave me to my sorrow, to my prayers for that poor child you forced me, like a coward that I am, to drive forth into the world, to his ruin and to his death."

"Go, but be warned!"

He looked grand in his indignation, anger and sorrow, and, the wicked woman shrunk from before his blazing eyes, for she was cowed at last and he had proven himself the master.

The next day he held service, but all saw that he was deeply moved about something, and, after his sermon he said in a few words that had just learned of the sad death of his son, by being drowned.

More he did not say, and returning to his home he remained alone with his grief.

The next day there was a change at the parsonage, for Duke was sent off to enter the navy, on board a vessel commanded by a brother of Mr. Harwell's first wife, and the three other children were sent to school, instead of remaining at home to be taught by their step-father, as had been the custom, while Mrs. Harwell, cowed, subdued, conscience-stricken, became like a different woman.

Thus had a pall fallen upon the rectory, which seemed haunted by the spirit of the boy who had been driven from his home, as was believed, to his death.

CHAPTER XII.

SERVING A PIRATE MASTER.

THE bleak winds of winter had ceased, and the balmy breezes of spring were wafted along the New England coast, which was becoming green and beautiful under the influence of the sun's increasing warmth.

Months had passed since the Night Bird had sailed away that dark night, leaving the smuggler's boats rowing shoreward with their booty, and dropping the lights of the academy and the village out of sight astern.

Down the coast had the Night Bird sailed, here and there pouncing upon a defenseless craft, robbing her of her valuables and setting her adrift, for Captain Breeze was not a merciless corsair, and only took life when he deemed it necessary, and burned none of his prizes, unless in rare cases.

The run down to West Indian waters was a long one, but successful beyond the expectations of Captain Breeze, and he was forced to put in to an island to get rid of his plunder.

Then, under the guise of an American man-of-war, he ran boldly into a Cuban port, and fitted up his vessel, after which he started upon another lawless cruise.

When in sight of the port, Captain Breeze called to Harry, who was in the cabin, and said:

"Harwell, I am very well aware that you wish to leave this vessel, and will do so at the first chance you get; but I intend to trust you in the port to which we are now going. If you run away, I'll hunt you up, for you cannot leave easily, and I'll give you over to the authorities. If you inform on us, I'll have the whole crew swear to your guilt, so that you will suffer, too."

"I need you, and more, I intend to keep you for awhile yet; then I shall make you certain offers, and, if you do not accept, I will consider the circumstance that you saved my life, and let you go your way."

"What do you say?"

"I'll not leave you, sir, in this port; but I do not wish to remain on your vessel."

"You are kind to me, so are the men, and yet you are pirates, and I will not lead a lawless life," was the answer.

No more was said upon the subject, and, as Captain Breeze took the youth ashore with him a great deal, passing him off as a middy, he enjoyed his stay in port immensely.

One day, some two weeks after leaving the port, the Night Bird started in chase of a large merchant vessel, that came out of the Mississippi river.

She steadily gained upon her, in spite of the fine sailing qualities of the ship, and when night came on was but half a league astern, and lessening the distance between herself and the chase rapidly.

A mile soon only divided them, and seeing that he could overhaul the ship, Captain Breeze did not fire upon her.

"Is not that a vessel, sir?"

"Whereaway, Harwell?" quickly asked Captain Breeze.

"Just forward of the chase, sir, and hidden by her."

"By Jove, but your keen eyes are right, Harwell, and we may be running into a trap."

"That clipper's captain has headed so as to hide the other vessel from us, and ten to one it is a cruiser," and Captain Breeze turned his glass upon the strange sail, seen so indistinctly in the moonlight.

"I cannot tell for the clipper; but I'll soon know," and he gave the order to suddenly put the helm down, and the schooner shot off suddenly to port, revealing the vessel ahead of the clipper.

"It is a cruiser, and playing into the clipper's hands, and in ten minutes more we would have seen her pass and give us a broadside."

"Ready about!"

At the order the schooner swept round and darted away on another course, just as half a dozen bright flashes came, the roar of guns followed, and a broadside of iron shot came flying toward the schooner.

"To your guns, all!" shouted Captain Breeze, as the balls cut through his bulwark and sails, here and there dropping a seaman in his tracks.

Almost instantly another broadside came, and this, too, did considerable damage.

But the schooner was now flying briskly along and all sail was being set, for in her chase of the ship she had not spread all of her canvas.

"That fellow is a sixteen-gun cruiser, and carries a big crew, so we've got to make the Night Bird fly," said Captain Breeze.

And fly she did, firing from her stern pivot-

gun at her pursuer, and receiving her running fire.

"We are gaining rapidly, sir," said Harry, as he stood on the poop deck, perfectly unmoved at the peril.

"Yes, and if she does not cripple us, we are all right," was the answer.

And on sped the fleet outlaw, steadily gaining, and at last the fire of her pursuer began to do less damage.

But suddenly a well-aimed shot buried itself in the mainmast, making the stout stick crack, and sending a shower of splinters forward that inflicted a number of wounds.

"In with that topsail, or the stick won't stand the strain," shouted Captain Breeze, and the maintopsail was taken in.

It reduced the speed of the schooner some, but still she gained swiftly, and after half an hour was fully out of range.

We have got to drop that fellow and then seek a South American port to put in another mast, for that one is cut half in two and would not stand a blow.

"It is too bad," said Captain Breeze.

Several days after the schooner ran into a small port, flying the English flag as a cruiser, and repairs were at once begun on her.

But it was slow work, as the port had but little conveniences for ship work, and spring had come before she sailed on her cruise to the northward.

"We have missed one appointment with Mercer; but we'll keep the next, and we'll doubtless capture some good cargoes for him," said Captain Breeze to Harry Harwell, as the schooner was put on her northerly course.

As Captain Breeze had anticipated, the Night Bird made several good captures, and arrived on time off the rendezvous of the smugglers.

It was just sunset when she came along the coast, a league off-shore, and got opposite the inlet near the village.

Then the wind utterly died away, and she was left becalmed upon the waters.

"To-morrow night Mercer and his boats would be out, for then are we due; but I wish he could know we were here and come out to-night, so that we could get away by dawn, when the breeze comes, for I don't like this coast, as there are too many American cruisers hereabout," said Captain Breeze, addressing Harry, who stood leaning over the taffrail, gazing at the distant academy, where he had known so much of sorrow and trials, during the few months he had been there.

"I know where the house of Mr. Mercer is, sir, and, as it is on the inlet below the village, I could go there and let him know you were off-shore, and wished to give him his cargo to-night," said Harry.

"By Neptune! but I'll trust you, Harwell, for here your neck is in a noose, and you will not be anxious to let a sheriff get the rope around you."

"Take the gig and go; and, mind you, return as soon as you can, for if the wind springs up I'll keep moving, while the air feels as though there was going to be a blow."

Five minutes after Harry Harwell was in the light gig, pulling with a strong, swift stroke, shoreward while the Night Bird lay becalmed astern of him, and the village lights guided him on his way to enter the inlet.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MEETING ON THE WATERS.

NEARER and nearer the shore drew the gig, the roar of the surf reaching the ears of the solitary oarsman.

Then the inlet opened before him, and he stopped rowing, turned and gazed shoreward.

The lights of the academy were plainly visible, and further up the inlet was the village.

Harry remembered that the cottage of Mercer, whom all in the village looked upon as a fisherman, was below the town, off to itself, and near the shore of the inlet, so he felt there would be no trouble in reaching it.

Captain Breeze had given him something of a disguise to put on, should he meet any one else, that he should not be recognized, and Harry felt no dread of going.

All of a sudden a dark object caught his eyes, and he gazed fixedly at it.

"It's a boat, and maybe a man coming out to meet the schooner, having seen her off-shore before dark."

"I will head back toward the vessel, and if it comes to a race, I have no fear of out-rowing him, or them, as the case may be."

And Harry turned his boat about.

As the other drew near he saw that it was a

small boat, and held but one person, as near as he could judge in the darkness.

The boat came steadily on under a light pair of oars, and it was evident to Harry that the man had not seen him.

As he drew nearer he called out, sharp and stern:

"Boat ahoy!"

Instantly the boat was whirled around by the skillful use of the oars, and then the occupant called out gruffly:

"Well, what do you want?"

"Red, blue and green," replied the youth.

"Ha! red it is; and you are from the schooner."

"Is that you, Mr. Mercer?"

"Ay, ay, it is, my lad; and you?"

"Harry Harwell," said the youth, as Mercer drew near.

"Give me a grip of your hand, lad! There; now how are you, and where were you heading?"

"For your house, for the schooner is off-shore."

"I saw her before sunset, and was going out to her."

"The captain wishes you to bring the boats out to-night, as it is a calm, and let him get away."

"I'll do it; but why did you miss last time?"

"We got crippled by a cruiser, and had to lay up for repairs."

"Success good?"

"Very."

"And how do you like pirating?"

"I hate it; and I shall leave as soon as I can."

"Ah!" and Mercer remained silent, while Harry continued:

"What is the news ashore?"

"Of course, you mean at the academy?"

"Yes."

"Well, your friend got into a scrape, too, in trying to keep the boys back from catching you."

"You mean Calvin Cole?" asked Harry, quickly.

"Yes; he got ahead of the boys who were chasing you, tried to stop them, and killed one by the name of Reuben Lang."

"Oh Heaven have mercy on him!"

"It's a fact, lad, and he stood his trial like a man."

"But they proved that you had stolen the money, then struck down Charlie Benton, and next, that Calvin Cole should be hanged for murder, and in two weeks he is to die on the gallows."

"Oh God! but he must not die, Mr. Mercer," eagerly said Harry.

"Can't be helped, lad."

"It must be!"

"Well, lad, I'll talk to you about it when I come out to the schooner to-night, for now I must go after my men and boats. Tell the captain I'll be off in a couple of hours at furthest," and the two boats separated, for Mercer rowed shoreward.

But, Harry rested upon his oars, and sat in deep thought.

Then he muttered to himself:

"Up the coast a league, I noticed, at sunset a brig becalmed."

"It is doubtless bound to Boston or New York, and now is my chance; but if not, I can then return to the schooner, for I must not leave dear Calvin Cole to his fate."

With a strong pull, as though his mind was made up, he sent his light boat flying over the waters.

In half an hour he came in sight of the brig, lying becalmed upon the still waters.

"Yes, there she is, and I believe a new life will open to me once I have set foot on an honest deck again," said Harry.

Pulling more leisurely now, he headed directly for the brig, while he said aloud as he glanced at the skies:

"The captain was right, for a storm is coming up and will be upon us before dawn."

As he drew near the brig there came a hail:

"Boat ahoy!"

"They keep good watch," said Harry, and aloud he answered:

"Ay, ay, sir, I would like to come on board."

"Come alongside," was the bluff rejoinder, and a moment after the boy reached the deck, and the mate led him back to the captain, who stood there talking with an elderly gentleman, who held the hand of a young girl.

"Captain, here is a youth who wishes to see you," said the mate.

"Well, my lad, what is it that is so important, that you come a league off-shore to board a

merchant brig?" said the captain, an honest, kind faced old sailor.

"I did not come from the shore, sir, but from a schooner that lies becalmed a league to the south of you, and—"

"Pardon me, but are you not Harry Harwell?" and the little girl came up to the youth, at the same time holding out her hand.

"Yes, miss, and you are Nellie."

Instantly the hands of the two clasped in a warm greeting, to the surprise of the old captain and the gentleman with whom he had been conversing, and the young girl cried excitedly:

"Papa, this is Harry Harwell, who saved our home from being robbed by that wicked man, Jack, and who killed him."

"My dear young gentleman, I am delighted to meet you, and have long desired to find you, but all my efforts were unavailing."

"Captain English, this is the brave boy of whom I told you, who saved my home from robbery and killed one of the burglars."

"No! I am glad to meet him; but what an odd coincidence, your meeting him as you do," and the captain wrung the hand which Mr. Lonsdale had just let go.

Harry was astounded, and also pained, for he felt that a cloud had fallen upon him since he had last seen the pretty Nellie.

"Well, my dear young sir, from whence do you come?" asked Mr. Lonsdale.

"I am sorry to say, sir, from a piratical cruise," was the frank response.

"No!"

"Do you mean it?"

"Oh, Harry!"

Such were the exclamations that followed this startling announcement, and Harry hastened to say:

"The truth is, I was picked up one night by a boat's crew and carried off to a vessel which proved to be a pirate."

"I was forced to serve the captain as a purser, and for the past five months have been on a piratical cruise in West Indian waters."

"At this moment the schooner lies a league to the southward, and I was sent by the captain to go ashore and communicate with one of his men, but I determined to carry out my long-cherished intention and escape, for I observed your brig before sunset, and knew in this dead calm it must still be here, so I rowed to you, not only to save myself, but also to warn you to get out of the pirate's way with the first breath of wind."

"My boy, I give you the warmest welcome for your good service, for I saw the schooner at sunset, and did not like her looks."

Mr. Lonsdale also thanked Harry for what he had done, while Nellie grasped his hand and said, feelingly:

"Poor Harry, what a hard time you have had of it among those cruel pirates; but you will stay with us now, for this is papa's brig, and we are on our way to Boston."

"I thank you, Miss Nellie; but I am anxious to get to Boston, for I have some important things to attend to," and turning to the old sailor, Harry continued:

"I think we are going to have a storm from the westward, sir, and it feels as if it was going to be a severe one."

"Egad, my lad, you are right, and you are a born sailor, I'll warrant, for I had not observed that the storm was threatening, though now I notice it, and shall prepare accordingly."

"I'll get your boat aboard, young sir, and you must make yourself at home, for there is a state-room for you, and a place at the table next to Miss Nellie," and the captain went forward, leaving Harry with Mr. Lonsdale and his pretty little daughter, who seemed delighted at finding her runaway hero once more.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TEMPEST.

"THAT coming storm is the kind of one that old winter sometimes gives on this coast at this season—a last kick at the coming spring," said Captain English, addressing Mr. Lonsdale and Harry, as they stood together upon the poop-deck of the brig.

Nellie had gone below to her state-room, and the care of her maid, for Mrs. Lonsdale had died shortly after the affair at the attempted burglary, having long been ill, and in his little trips the father often took his daughter, who was most anxious to accompany him.

Mr. Lonsdale was a very wealthy shipping merchant of Boston, with business interests at Portland and New York, and he was wont to go in his own vessels several times a year on round trips.

It was while coming in the brig from Portland to Boston that they had been overtaken by the

calm, which had caused the strange meeting with Harry Harwell.

The brig was a trader, but a stanch craft, with a fine cabin, comfortably fitted up.

She was old, but her captain preferred her to a newer vessel, and she carried but a small crew, and was easily handled.

Captain English had made all ready to meet the storm, and joined the merchant on the poop-deck, and all saw that the storm would be a severe one, for the heavens were becoming overcast, flashes of lightning came incessantly from black waves of clouds in the west, and yet a dead lull seemed upon earth, sea and air.

The atmosphere was close and heavy, and the brig rose and fell upon the swell in a listless way, with not a breath of air to fill the storm-sails that were set.

Harry had not yet told upon Mercer, as a smuggler, for he did not care to do so, and so those on the brig did not know what was going on a league away at the schooner.

Harry, however, had seen Mercer's signal lights, and the red answering signal at the mast-head of the schooner, and he knew that Mercer had gotten out much sooner than he had expected, and more, that the boats were being rapidly loaded in the face of the coming storm.

"They know I have fled, and yet I do not believe that Captain Breeze blames me," he said to himself.

Nearer and nearer came the storm, the mutterings growing louder and more threatening, the lightning more vivid and incessant.

"That will be a terror," said Captain English.

"Yes, it looks so; but I hope we can meet it well," responded Mr. Lonsdale.

"Captain, if you will pardon me, can I make a suggestion?" said Harry.

"Certainly, my lad."

"Well, sir, although pirates are in deadly peril from capture all the time, they seem to prepare against the elements more than they do against cruisers, and while I have been cruising on the Night Bird, Captain Breeze has constantly kept his two largest boats ready for instant use in case of need."

"He has had stores, oars, a sail, bedding and water all in them, and ready to launch at a moment's notice, so that if it came to deserting the ship but little would have to be done at the last moment, while the things were all ready for the other boats too, if needed; but of course two boats will more than carry those on your brig."

Captain English looked at Mr. Lonsdale in a knowing way, and said:

"My lad, you are worth your weight in gold, and your suggestion shall be acted upon."

"The brig is a good sea boat, but in very rough weather she leaks a trifle, and it is best to be prepared."

"For your suggestion I'll let you command the whale-boat if we have to leave the ship, and in that you can take four of my best men, Mr. Lonsdale and Miss Nellie as passengers, while I and my mates with the other six men will go in the yawl."

"Oh, sir, I do not wish to take the place of one of your mates," urged Harry.

"One of them, my lad, is sick in his bunk now, and the other is suffering from a broken arm, so your services come in just right, and you can aid me greatly, for I'll wager my little cottage in Portland that you are a good sailor."

So it was settled, and Harry set to work stowing the things away in the whale-boat, as they were brought to him.

It was a fine boat, long, deep, with high sides, and very stanch, the bow and stern being very high.

There was a brace and step for a mast, a good rudder, and amidships Harry made a particularly comfortable cuddy for Nellie and her negro maid.

He arranged all to his satisfaction, got the boat ready to launch at a moment's notice, and found that the captain had done equally as well by the yawl, a good arrangement having been made to protect the sick mate, and the one with the broken arm.

The storm had now swept near, and was threatening to burst at any moment, though as yet not a breath of air was felt.

"You will help me, Master Harwell, for we are going to get it worse than I supposed, and the sickness of my first mate, and the crippling of the other, leaves me in the lurch," said Captain English.

"I will do all I can, sir."

"You understand the duties of an officer, doubtless?"

"Oh yes, sir, for I have frequently taken the deck, at the request of Captain Breeze who did all he could to teach me an officer's duties—but the storm is upon us," and, as Harry spoke there came a lurid glare of lightning that seemed to set the sea ablaze, a deafening peal of thunder followed like the discharge of a thousand heavy guns, the tempest came howling down from the black, trailing clouds, and the devoted brig, seized in its ruthless grasp, was hurled half out of the water, its stormsails were torn away, and, half buried in foam, her topmasts carried away, the vessel was driven before the fierce hurricane with a speed that was terrific, while those on her decks held their breath with fear that she would plunge forever beneath the wind-lashed waters that surged, whirled and seethed about her.

CHAPTER XV. ADRIFT!

THE behavior of the brig, in the terrible tempest that struck her so ruthlessly, was all that could be wished, for she rallied from the first shock nobly, and went driving along under bare poles along with the wall of foaming waters.

As soon as possible, Captain English rigged stormsails upon her to steady her, and at this work Harry sprung forward with the men, showing his skill and fearlessness, and winning their respect and admiration.

The men were encouraged to greater exertions and exposure by the example of the boy, and they soon had the brig in good storm trim.

But instead of decreasing in fury, the storm increased, and with a terrific report the mainmast went over the side, dragging the foremast with it, and the brig lurched to under the wreckage.

"Axes here! cut away the wreck!" came in the clear voice of Harry Harwell, and Captain English himself sprung forward with an ax.

Instantly the sound of sharp blows was heard, cordage snapped, spars were broken, and working almost waist deep in water the gallant crew cleared the brig of the wreckage and she righted, and once more went driving on, a mere wreck upon the waters.

But a staysail, ~~rough~~ affair though it was, was rigged on the stump of the foremast, and it held the brig on her way before the gale, which now began to lessen in violence.

In an hour's time the fury of the tempest was spent, and the brig held on under her one sail, while the men sprung to the pumps, for the carpenter reported that she was leaking badly.

The stars now shone out, the gale had subsided to a six-knot breeze, and all hands stood near to take their trick at the pumps.

Nellie had come on deck with her negro maid, Hannah, and then stood at the head of the companionway, watching most earnestly all that was done, while Mr. Lonsdale with anxious face kept his eyes on the men at the pumps.

Presently Mr. Lonsdale came aft, and Nellie asked:

"Papa, will we be lost?"

"I think all will come right, my child."

"Yes, Miss Nellie, we will be all right, though we may have to desert the brig for the boats, which, thanks to the advice of that gallant boy, are all ready for us," said Captain English coming aft.

"You think it is as bad as that, Captain English?" Mr. Lonsdale remarked.

"Yes, sir, for the water gains rapidly; but the sky is clear you see, the sea is running down fast, and we have a fair breeze for land, which is not over twenty miles away."

"I hope the pirate schooner has gone down," said Mr. Lonsdale earnestly.

"No danger of that, sir, for she has ridden out a dozen such tempests as this one since I have been on her, and worse, for in Southern latitudes we get them far worse," and Harry came forward and joined the party aft, while Captain English said:

"I have so heard, my lad, for I have never been South of Baltimore."

"I came to report, sir, that the water gains so rapidly, that the brig is settling with dangerous rapidity," continued Harry.

"Then we must get ready to take to the boats. Miss Nellie, please get together from the cabin all you wish to carry, and I'll send a couple of seamen after it."

This was done, and in half an hour more the whale-boat was launched over the lee side, the bulwarks having been cut away for the purpose, and in it, at the oars, were four seamen while Larry took the tiller.

The sea had run down greatly, and Mr. Lonsdale, Nellie and the negress got into the boat and it went safely into the waters, riding the waves like a cork.

Next followed the large yawl, and with the sick and crippled mates well cared for, it also was successfully launched, Captain English being at the tiller.

As the sea was too rough to get up sail, the oarsmen simply sat ready to steady the boats when need be, and thus hours passed away.

Toward dawn the sea had run down so as to become almost smooth, and the wind had died away to a mere breath; but suddenly there rolled over the waters a heavy cloud-bank of fog, and the two boats, some cables' length apart, were shut out from the view of each other.

For a couple of hours the fog lasted, the dawn came, and soon after the sun arose and the mist was dispelled, but the other boat was nowhere to be seen.

It could not have sunk, that was certain, and yet it had mysteriously disappeared.

The fog-bank was drifting slowly away, and soon out of its density a vessel appeared, a league distant.

"It is the schooner!" said Harry.

"The pirate?" asked Mr. Lonsdale, in a whisper.

"Yes, sir."

"She has not been hurt by the tempest?"

"I told you she would not be, sir."

"And the other boat?"

"May have been picked up by the schooner, sir, or may still be hidden by the drifting fog-bank, for she was in that direction when we saw her last."

"I pray the fog may still hide her, for there is one thing certain: if the pirate captures them, it will go hard with them, poor fellows!"

"They do not see us yet, sir."

"I hope they will not, for with this light breeze even, she could soon run down and pick us up."

"Yes, sir, and—but there is the land, sir!" and Harry pointed to a long, dark outline far away.

"If we could only reach it, we would be safe."

"Yes, sir; but the schooner could catch us before we got there, as she will sail three knots to our one; but if she holds on as she is now heading, we can set sail and run for it."

"God grant she may," fervently said Mr. Lonsdale.

And a silence followed, until Nellie startled all by saying:

"Oh, see that rock!"

All eyes were turned in the direction in which she pointed, and the seamen cried in a breath:

"A whale! a whale!"

"And a monster, too," Mr. Lonsdale remarked, for he had often seen whales off that coast.

"It is indeed, sir," and Harry turned his glass upon the huge whale, which was lying a quarter of a mile away, motionless upon the waters.

"Under other circumstances we might go whaling, if we had a harpooner," Mr. Lonsdale said, with a smile.

"I can throw a harpoon well, sir, for I frequently harpooned porpoise and sharks off the Jersey coast," said the youth.

"We've got all the tackle, sir, harpoons and all, for the captain was a whaler once, and kept it for use when we ran across whales," said one of the seamen.

"We are more anxious now to keep from being harpooned ourselves," said Harry, pointing toward the schooner, and adding: "You see we are discovered."

It was true; the schooner, while they were eying the whale, had changed her course, and was standing toward them.

"Give way, lads; we must pull for the shore," said Harry.

"The whale lays right in our course," Nellie remarked.

"There is the other boat!" cried Harry, as far away in-shore the yawl was discerned as the fog drifted away.

"They are safe, at least, from the pirate, and Captain English will report our capture and send a cruiser in chase," said Mr. Lonsdale.

"They'll have to send more than one, and fast ones, too; sir, to overhaul that schooner," whispered Harry, and he added aloud:

"I intend to take a risk, sir, and see if we cannot escape."

"How do you mean?"

Harry pointed to the whale.

"I yet do not understand you."

"He is pointed toward the land, sir, his head

being in that direction, so, if struck, he will start in that way and go like an arrow.

"If I can harpoon him, he will drag us at a rate that will leave the schooner far astern, while, if the whale changes his course, I can cut the harpoon line, and then pull shoreward."

"My boy, you are a genius."

"For Heaven's sake, make the trial," fervently said Mr. Lonsdale, while Nellie clapped her hands with delight.

CHAPTER XVI. A REMARKABLE TOW.

HARRY did not show the trepidation he felt, at the fear of again going on board the schooner Night Bird.

He knew, independent of himself, if he was taken, that Captain Breeze would hold on to him, and then nothing could be done to save poor Calvin Cole from the gallows.

Then, too, he did not wish to have Mr. Lonsdale taken, and Nellie, for he was well aware that Captain Breeze would demand a princely ransom for their release.

So he determined to take the seemingly desperate chance of harpooning a whale to escape from the schooner.

He knew, in the five-knot breeze blowing, they could not keep away from the schooner by oar or sail; but, should the whale tow them a few miles landward, they could readily reach the shore themselves, as the speed of their "tow-boat" would take them at a pace that was dangerous.

The yawl was a long way off, and could easily reach the shore, but seemed to be standing, as though those on board were watching the whale-boat and schooner, for they could not possibly see the whale at that distance.

The schooner was now coming along under full sail, heading on a tack that would bring them near the boat, and she was not more than a mile away.

Harry determined upon his course, the brave boy relinquished the tiller to Mr. Lonsdale and went forward.

With the aid of two of the men he got the long harpoon and line ready, made a neat coil, and took his stand.

Then the oarsmen took their places at the four rowlocks aft, and stood ready, while Nellie and the negress were asked to sit back in the stern.

Not quite satisfied with the way the boat was trimmed, Harry had some of the luggage moved aft, until the bow was raised out of the water to a height he deemed necessary.

Then he threw the harpoon several times, to test its weight and merits, and dragging it in again stood ready, while he gave the order for the oarsmen to move ahead.

The schooner was coming on uncomfortably near, as the boat moved toward the whale, which was indeed a monster of the deep.

The huge animal lay upon the waters, its broad back, long and rounding, looking like a monitor of the present day.

All unconscious of danger, it basked in the sunlight, and drowsily floated upon the sea.

Nearer and nearer approached the boat, and not a word was said.

At last Harry moved his left hand to starboard a little, and Mr. Lonsdale promptly obeyed.

"Steady!" he said in a low voice, and the order had hardly left his lips when came:

"Way 'nough!"

The oars were raised and became motionless, and the boat glided slowly toward its prey.

Suddenly the right arm of Harry was drawn back, and the harpoon was raised in air.

An instant it was held thus—and then, with wonderful strength and marvelous skill the weapon was sent on its errand.

Squarely it struck the whale, the sharp blade burying itself deep into the broad back of the monster.

Then there was a sudden jerk, showers of spray were dashed on high, the huge fluke fell with a report like a heavy gun, the whale-boat danced upon the rough waters, and like lightning the animal dashed away.

The line ran off from the reel with a whirring sound, then came the jerk, the drag, and the whale-boat fairly shot forward through the waters, just as a loud report was heard, and the heavy pivot gun on the schooner's fore-castle was fired and a solid ball of iron plowed up the ocean not ten fathoms from the flying boat.

But Harry never flinched as he stood in the bows of the whale-boat, watching the sea monster rushing ahead, directly toward the land, and dragging the boat after him at a speed which the schooner, fast as she was, would have to have a gale to equal.

In the boat half-crouched the seamen, excited,

yet silent, while in the stern, his hand upon the tiller, sat Mr. Lonsdale and Nellie, her hands clasped, watching the foaming waters where the whale was driving through them.

The negress was on her knees, her hands clasped and upraised, her face upturned in prayer, and astern, coming on under a press of canvas, and firing from her pivot gun on the fore-castle, came the pirate schooner in chase.

It was a thrilling scene; Harry, watching the result of his daring venture, with the pirate schooner in full chase of the wounded whale, dragging the flying boat, and those who witnessed it never forgot it.

"Harry, your whale is a grand success," cried Mr. Lonsdale, as he saw how they were flying away from the schooner.

"Yes, sir, we will escape all right," answered Harry; "it was a hazard, but if we hadn't taken it, where now would we be?"

"If the schooner does not hit us with a shot," remarked Mr. Lonsdale, as a shot struck near, "we certainly have the advantage."

"We will soon be out of range at this rate, sir," and Harry gazed ahead at the shore which they were so rapidly approaching.

The course of the whale lay in a straight line for the land, and, as it was dragging the boat at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, the schooner would soon be distanced.

This the pirate captain seemed to realize, and he fired rapidly for awhile, and then ceased.

Almost at the same moment the whale began to slacken its speed, and, after being towed a short distance further, Harry cut the harpoon-line, and the monster again darted off at a tangent.

But the seamen now bent to their oars, and, pulling with all their might, sent the boat along at a rapid pace, though it appeared to crawl, in comparison with their former speed.

Feeling now that they were safe, for the schooner stood away on a southerly course, the whale-boat was headed toward the yawl, once a league distant, and, in an hour's time the two boats had joined company again, and Captain English was loud in his praise of Harry's brave and skillful act.

The two boats now lay side by side, breakfast was served, and eaten with a relish, and the rapidly disappearing schooner was gazed after with feelings of joy at escaping the clutches of the pirates.

The shore was a few miles distant, and it had just been decided by Captain English to pull for the nearest port, which was Gloucester, when Harry sung out:

"Sail ho!"

Then, coming around the point of the land was a large schooner, and, after a glance Captain English said:

"It is the Portland and Boston packet, so we are safe," and in an hour more they were taken on board the vessel where a hospitable welcome was given to one and all of the shipwrecked party from the unfortunate brig.

CHAPTER XVII. TRUE TO A FRIEND.

WHILE on board the schooner Captain Breeze had been very generous to Haphazard Harry, as I will now call my adventurous and right-minded hero.

He had made him several presents of costly trinkets, studded with precious gems, and one day had said:

"Harry, as you refuse all prize-money as crime-stained, take this roll of bills for your services, for they were gotten honestly in a trade I made when ashore in Cuba."

"There are twelve hundred dollars in that roll, and the money is as honest as money can be, considering that all of it goes, at one time or another, for questionable purposes."

"You have well earned that money, so take it."

Harry tried to refuse, but the chief insisted, and he put it away in an inner pocket of his jacket, where were his trinkets.

These he had with him when he left the schooner, though he had no intention of deserting the craft then, and, but for the danger his friend Calvin Cole was in, he would have awaited for another opportunity.

When therefore he arrived in Boston he determined to at once start for the village near the academy and endeavor to rescue Calvin Cole and take any personal hazard to accomplish his purpose.

He had learned a good deal of the world since he had left his Jersey home, and he knew that money would buy almost anything, and he felt quite rich with his twelve hundred dollars.

Yet he was anxious to go well prepared, and

he determined to find out what the trinkets were worth which the chief, and the mates on the schooner had given him as keepsakes.

But how to get away from Mr. Lonsdale and Nellie was the question.

The former wished him to come to his home and be his adopted son, while Nellie was most anxious to greet him as a brother.

Then Captain English desired him to go to sea, as supercargo of the new ship which Mr. Lonsdale had promised him, and the merchant also said, if he desired to go into the navy as a midshipman he would get him the berth.

Now Mercer had not told Harry that he had not killed Charlie Benton, and he really believed that he had done so, and also felt that, branded as a thief as well, he dared not enter the navy, and must hide away, so he told his kind friends that he must go and see those who had a claim upon him, and then he would come, or write what he would do regarding their kind offers, for he rather leaned toward the supercargo's berth, as a position that would keep him in the background.

So, when the packet reached Boston, he bade them good-by, and went ashore to an inn.

Purchasing some needed clothing, he sauntered out to look up a disguise, well-knowing that he dared not go to the neighborhood of the academy as he was.

At length he hit upon the disguise of a common sailor, and purchased a garb, with a red-dish wig and short-fringe beard that defied detection.

Then he went to a dealer in old gold and gems, and displayed his trinkets before him, asking their value.

The man was a Jew, and asked:

"Vere vas you gets dese, mine fri'nt?"

"The question is, sir, what is their value."

"So dat vas, mine fri'nt."

"Vell, dey vas wort' a goot deals of monish."

"How much?"

The Jew placed a trinket down; it was a miniature case, the likeness having been taken out, and the solid gold was set with diamonds.

"I gif you one thousand tollars for t'e lockets," said the merchant.

"A thousand dollars?" cried Harry, with amazement at its value, and which so startled the Jew that he hastened to add:

"I makes it t'irteen hundred tollars den, mine fri'nt."

Harry was the more astonished, but he said quietly:

"And this diamond-studded cross?"

"It vas vort a t'ousand tollars."

"And this ring?"

"Five hundred tollars."

"This watch, gold-linked fob chain and seal, now?"

"As much as the ring."

"This seal ring?"

"Fifty tollars, for it vas very rare stone and cutting of head."

"I shall keep the watch, chain and seal ring, but I wish to sell the other things—so give me the largest sum you can, please."

The Jew took up the miniature case, ring and gem-set cross, and after a little thought, said:

"I gives you three thousand tollars for dese."

"I'll take it," and the Jew's eyes twinkled at the grand bargain he had made, for the things were worth double the sum.

Armed with his money in bank-notes of large denominations, Harry returned to his inn, engaged a seat in the Gloucester stage; and those who saw the supposed sailor of thirty enter, carrying his little carpet-bag, would not have believed him a beardless boy of sixteen.

In due time he was put down at Gloucester, and there he chartered a small smack to carry him to the inlet, on the shores of which was the village where Calvin Cole lay in jail awaiting his execution, for every effort of his rich father and learned lawyers to save the unfortunate young man had been unavailing.

It was just after sunset when the five-ton smack, with its skipper and his son as the crew, dropped anchor just off the cottage of Mercer, the smuggler, and Harry Harwell, springing into the little boat, rowed ashore.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A BRAVE BOY'S PLOT.

MERCER, the smuggler, had just risen from his supper and lighted his pipe, when a knock at the door disturbed him.

The smuggler was supposed to be a fisherman, and in reality he was one, for daily he furnished fish for the little village market and the academy, and appeared to dwell in happiness in his cosy home with his wife and two children, a boy and a girl.

But the honest villagers did not know his secret life, and that he was the leader of a band of coast smugglers, who all like him, following honest occupations, yet were law-breakers under the darkness of the night.

He started at the knock, for the guilty always live in dread, and opening the door beheld Harry Harwell, but in his disguise did not know him.

"Well, shipmate, a good-evening to you."

"Are you ashore in a strange cruising-ground?" he asked.

"Not exactly, for I found the anchorage of Captain Mercer for whom I am looking."

"Well, I'm your man."

"So I see, and I want a private talk with you."

"Anything gone wrong, mate?"

"Yes, much."

Mercer was uneasy, for he could not recall where he had before seen the stranger, so he said:

"Come out under the trees with me, and we'll talk over the matter, mate, whatever it is," and he led the way to a bench under a large tree, near the shore.

"Now let me know your errand, shipmate?" he said anxiously.

"Do you know a youth by the name of Harry Harwell?"

"I did," said Mercer with a start.

"Where is he?"

"He got into trouble up at the academy, and was run into the surf, and folks say he was drowned."

"Are you anything to him?"

"I'm Harry Harwell himself. Mercer, and I've been trying my disguise on you."

"Sea Serpents and Man Eaters! you don't mean it?"

"I do."

"Grasp my hand, boy, for I'm glad to see you, for I was afraid you had ventured inshore t'other night and got caught and run off to prison, though I couldn't learn anything about you."

"And Captain Breeze so thought too?"

"Yes, and said he would run in with his boats and take you out of the jail, for he thinks lots of you; but I told him I would find out and let him know, and he's to be back tomorrow night for an answer."

"No, Mercer, I did not land, but I boarded a brig, that lay becalmed up the coast."

"I saw her."

"And she was wrecked in the storm, we took to the boats, sighted the Night Bird in the morning, and I escaped her by harpooning a whale."

"Lad, I heard of that from up the coast fishermen, who saw it and they do say it was the grandest sight they ever saw."

"And it was you did the harpooning lad?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, two of my boys found the whale, dead and they got boats and towed him inshore and they have got a good thing of it, thanks to you; but your boats were picked up by the Portland and Boston packet, I hear?"

"Yes, and I then came on here, by stage to Gloucester, and by smack from there. Yonder lies my smack, with a skipper and his son on board, and, as I said, I came here to see you."

"Not going back to the schooner?"

"No indeed, Mercer, for I am no pirate; but don't you fear, for I'll never betray you, old fellow."

"I'll trust you, boy; but I guess I can call the reason why you came."

"Well?"

"To see your friend."

"Calvin Cole?"

"Yes."

"I came to get him out."

"It will be hard to do."

"I don't think so; but at any rate I shall make the trial."

"What will you do, lad?"

"The jail stands below the town on the inlet."

"Yes; about a half mile from here."

"Where is Calvin's cell?"

"In the upper story, overlooking the water."

"You said the schooner would be off-shore tomorrow night?"

"Yes, lad."

"Well, I don't wish to have you ask Captain Breeze to help us, for bloodshed would follow; but Calvin Cole shall not be hanged, Captain Mercer. He got into his trouble in saving me, and I will rescue him, though I do not wish harm to come of it, and any one to be hurt."

"You know the jail well; so, can you not communicate with him in some way?"

"Oh yes; for my wife has felt sorry for him,

and several times she's sent him something to eat that was nice."

"The very thing, for she can bake him a cake and in it she can put a couple of files and a strong rope, with a note I will give him."

"Lad, you've got a big brain; but what then?"

"I will tell him to file away the bars, so that he can get out to-morrow night when all is quiet and let himself down into the yard."

"Then he has the wall, which is twelve feet high, you know."

"Yes, but I will be outside, just at the corner, and when he throws something over to let me know he is there, I will throw the end of a rope ladder over for him, for after his long confinement he may be too weak to climb a single rope."

"There is a tree standing some twenty feet, if I remember right, from the wall, and he can tie a rope about that, and carry it up with him to make the end of the ladder fast, so that he can come down on the outside, and I think all will go well."

"I don't doubt it, lad, and my boy, whom you saved from the academy boys' abuse one day, will do just as you tell him, for he thinks a great deal of you I can tell you, and I don't mind telling him that his old mate, Master Harry, ain't dead yet and wants him to serve him."

"Do so, captain, and bring him on board the smack to-morrow to see me."

"No, you stay just here, for we've got a pleasant room, and you can show wife just how to put the files and rope in the cake."

"I'll go up to the town and get them to-night."

"And I'll go with you, for my disguise is complete," was the answer, and Haphazard Harry took a good look at the jail and its surroundings and went to bed that night in Mercer's cottage, with a feeling that he could save his friend from death.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRIENDSHIP'S BOND.

MRS. MERCER was a pleasant-faced woman, a good wife and mother, and she little dreamed that her husband was other than an honest fisherman.

She had never seen Harry Harwell, but her mother's heart had gone out most kindly for him, when her little boy had come home one day and told how he had taken his part so bravely against a dozen boys.

She had heard how he had been accused of taking the money belonging to Ralph Radcliffe, and at once she had said:

"I do not believe it, for that boy would not steal," and she had felt deeply when told he had been drowned.

So when her husband came to her and told her that Harry had turned up, that he had not been drowned, but that he was in disguise, and wished to save his poor friend from being hanged, she felt delighted at being taken into confidence, and she gave the youth a warm welcome indeed.

"No, sir, he should not be hanged, and I have felt so sorry for him, poor young man, and for you!"

"I will do all I can for you," she had said, and so it was, when Harry returned from up in the town with Mercer, the good woman had her best room ready for her guest, and a nice supper spread out.

The next morning Harry renewed his acquaintance with little Ike, and let him into the secret of who he was.

"Now, Ike, I know I can trust you," he said. "And I wish you to take a cake from your mother to poor Mr. Cole in the jail."

"Give it into his hands, for your mother will send some jelly and other things."

"Then watch your chance, when the keeper does not see you, and let him know that there is something in that cake."

"Do you understand, Ike?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you will do this for me?"

"Yes indeedly I will, and anything else you tells me," returned Ike.

An hour after Ike set off for the jail. He trudged up to the gate and knocked.

The keeper let him in, and Ike was prepared with a small cake for him.

"I'd like to give these goodies to Mr. Cole, from my ma," he said, adding: "And here's a cake for you."

"You are good, Ike; but I won't rob the poor prisoner, as he's got little time left to enjoy anything, and he's so brave and good."

"Here, come with me," and the good-hearted keeper led the way into the jail, up the stairs,

along a corridor, and stopped at a door of iron grating.

This he opened and Ike entered.

"A visitor to see you, Mr. Cole: little Ike Mercer, and he's got some good things for you," said the keeper.

Calvin Cole was pacing the cell in a monotonous walk, but he stopped and turned toward the boy.

His fine form was thin now, his face haggard; but his eyes were bright and his lips stern and fearless, for his pride was not broken, his courage remained.

"Ah, Ike, I am glad to see you."

"Ma sent you these, Mr. Cole," said Ike.

"Sit down, and the keeper will let you stay awhile with me, for you certainly cannot be dangerous—eh, Bowdon?" and Calvin Cole smiled as he turned to the keeper, who answered:

"Guess not, sir, if he hasn't got anything contraband; have you, Ike?"

"No, sir."

"It is my duty to search you, Ike."

"Yes, sir."

Ike stood up, and the keeper went through his pockets, which was no easy task, for, being a boy, Ike's pockets were the receptacle for the odds and ends of the household.

Then he ran his hands over his clothing, and was considered safe.

Next the basket of good things was looked over and nothing was found.

"Here, Bowdon, take half of this cake and give it to your little ones, for I cannot eat much of it," and Calvin Cole took up the tell-tale cake.

But, Ike here loomed up with grandeur, and he lied with the face of a deacon, as he grasped the cake and said:

"Mister Calvin, that is mother's birthday cake, sir, and she don't want you to cut it until to-morrow, when she's thirty-four years old, sir."

"Ah! then to-morrow, Bowdon, you shall have your share, for half of it will last me as long as I live," and he smiled grimly.

Bowdon turned away and left the boy with the prisoner, while Calvin Cole said:

"Ike, your mother ought not to have sent me her birthday cake, but kept it for herself, and I shall insist upon keeping only a part, and sending the rest back."

"Tain't no birthday cake," said Ike.

"You said that it was."

"I lied."

"Isaac, oh, Isaac! what do you mean?" said the surprised prisoner.

"Ma is bakin' a birthday cake, and it's to be eat to-morrow, sir, but that hain't the cake, as you'll see if you break it open."

"Just now you said I must not do so until to-morrow."

"I've changed my mind, now Mr. Bowdon hain't here."

"Oh!" and the pale face of Calvin Cole flushed. Could he after all have friends, he wondered?

Taking up the cake he broke it open, and his hands trembled, his eyes stared, as he beheld what it contained.

"Put it together, sir, until I git away; but there's a letter in it, with them other fixin's," said Ike.

Calvin Cole obeyed, for just then the boy was the master of the man.

So he nibbled away at the good things sent, and chatted away with Ike for quite a while, when Bowdon came back to let the boy out.

Gathering up his things Ike shook hands good-bye, said he would come again, if Mr. Bowdon would let him, and departed.

When alone Calvin Cole opened the cake and took out a piece of oil silk wrapped around a bit of paper.

Hastily he opened it and read:

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND:—

"I did not die in the surf as you all supposed, and I have come back to find that I did not take the life of Charlie Benton, but that you killed Reuben Lang in protecting me."

"I cannot tell you how grieved I am at your sad lot, that you should suffer for me; but I can tell you that it is in my power to save you, and I will."

"You are not guilty of murder, for you meant no wrong, and you shall not hang."

"To prove my words, herein you will find three files, with which to cut through your iron bars."

"Cut through an end of two bars, near the corner, and bend them out, so as to give space."

"This will save time."

"A rope also is sent you for you to lower yourself into the yard from your window."

"Also several pebbles for you to put in your pocket to throw over the wall and thus notify me that you are out of the jail."

"Go to the southeast corner of the jail, for not far away is a tree."

"Toss the pebbles outside, and I will throw a stone into the yard that is attached to a string, by which you can draw a rope-ladder over the wall."

"At the end of the ladder will be a coil of rope, which make fast to the tree, and that will support your weight when descending on the outside of the wall."

"Do not leave your cell until the academy bell rings eleven."

"Should aught prevent your starting to-night—do not start after three A. M.—I will be on hand to-morrow night and the next."

"Hoping for success, and believing in it,

"Your devoted friend,

"HARRY HARWELL."

Over and over again was this letter read, and the face of the poor prisoner flushed with hope.

Then he destroyed every particle of the letter, after he had learned its instructions thoroughly, and taking out one of the files, put the two halves of the cake together again, laying all aside upon a shelf.

Then he stepped up to one of the windows, for his cell was in the corner of the building, and tried the file upon the first iron bar from the sill.

To his delight, it cut into the iron with much greater ease than he had expected it would, and by covering it over with a towel the sound was deadened in a great measure.

After working for a while he stopped to rest, and saw that he had cut one-fourth of the way through the iron bar, which was an inch in diameter.

Then he left off, wetting the towel and hanging it on the bar, as if to dry, but really to hide the place he had cut.

Thus the day dragged its weary length along, and he ate both his dinner and supper with a relish which caused Bowdon to say:

"You are the gamest man I ever saw, Mr. Cole."

Calvin Cole smiled but made no answer, and soon was left alone in the darkness of his cell.

Then, by feeling he began his work again, and stopping at every sound, worked with a caution that the occasion demanded.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ESCAPE.

TRUE to his promise in his letter Haphazard Harry went to the jail, carrying with him the rope-ladder, and accompanied by Ike, who pulled him to a landing near the jail.

Ike had told his story when he got home, about his telling a lie regarding the cake; but his mother forgave him readily, and his father and Haphazard Harry gave him credit for a great deal of nerve.

Captain Mercer had gone out to sea in his skiff, to speak with the captain of the Night Bird, to let him know what was being done, and at the same time tell him, at Haphazard Harry's request, that he had purposely left the schooner and would not return.

Harry had also gone on board his smack, to tell the old skipper and his son to be ready to get under way at a moment's notice, and to watch up the inlet for a boat coming down with a blue light in her bow, and, when he discovered her, to at once raise his anchor, set sail and stand up to meet it.

Landing at the point, Haphazard Harry left Ike in the boat, seated at the oars, the stern against the shore and the bow turned seaward, so as to pull off without delay.

Going up to the jail the young sailor found the grated gate and saw that all the lights were out, excepting the one in the main corridor.

Then he went to the corner, where he had promised to be, and sat down to wait.

A half an hour passed away, and then something dropped near him.

Instantly he was upon his feet, and a moment after he gave the stone a toss, to which was attached a small string.

He heard it drop, and stood with bated breath.

Then he felt a pull upon it, and he let out the end of the rope ladder, saw it drawn over the wall, and when the knot in the rope he held told him it had reached the ground on the other side, he put his foot in a loop to hold it fast.

He felt it drawn hard upon, then saw a dark object appear on the top of the wall, and next the other end of the rope-ladder was dropped over.

An instant more and a form stood by his side.

"Calvin!"

"Harry! God bless you!"

Such was their meeting, and their hands clasped, while Harry hurried his friend away in silence.

The boat was soon reached, and seating the fugitive in the stern, Harry told Ike to get up in the bow and hold the blue lantern over, so as to be seen on the smack.

Then he seized the oars and the light skiff was sent flying down the inlet.

It was a pull of half a mile; the smack was found, standing across the inlet, and luffing up, Harry and Calvin Cole boarded.

"Good-by, Ike, and keep this to remember me and put you through the academy," said Haphazard Harry, slipping a roll of bills into the boy's hand.

"Good-by, Ike! We will meet again some day, my brave boy," Calvin Cole said, while his voice quivered.

"Now, my friend, we wish to run out to sea without delay," and Harry turned to the skipper, as Ike pulled off in his skiff.

"Yes, sir, you're the cap'n," said the skipper, and the smack was headed seaward, gliding swiftly along under a fair breeze.

Seating Calvin in the cockpit, Harry brought out of the cabin a heavy coat and a hat, which he forced him to put on, and then he took his stand forward, to watch for the boat of Captain Mercer.

It was sighted outside of the inlet, and the skipper headed for it.

In a short while the smuggler was alongside, the smack having come to, and Haphazard Harry and Calvin Cole got into the skiff at the request of Mercer, who pulled off a short distance and said:

"We can talk here, young gentlemen, away from the skipper's ears."

"I'm delighted to see you free, Master Calvin."

"Thank you, Mercer, and I owe it to you, Harry, Ike and your wife."

"You owe it to Haphazard Harry here, sir, for I had given up all hope of saving you, until he came last night; but now to talk business."

"You are under sentence of death, and you dare not be taken again!"

"True."

"What have you in view?"

"Nothing."

"Of course Harry has not told you his experience, for he's had no time?"

"Not a word."

"Well, sir, to be plain, I'm a fisherman, but I'm a smuggler as well, as Master Haphazard here knows."

"I picked him up out of the water, and I got him a bunk upon a pirate craft, the fleetest on the sea, and with a gentleman for captain, if he is a pirate, and he did not wish to remain; but he took a cruise in her, served the captain well and then took French leave a week ago off this coast."

"He went to Boston, got that smack and came to help you; but he says he won't go back to the schooner."

"This leaves a berth for you if you choose to take it, and if not, Captain Breeze has promised me he will take you to some southern port, where you can start out for yourself as you please, and he'll give you a lift in money to do it with, for, as I tell you, he is a man, outlaw though he be."

"What do you say, Master Calvin?"

"I'll go, for I dare not attempt to hide here, and I can seek a home elsewhere, and perhaps lead a sea life."

"If not, my father is rich, and if Harry reports to him where I am, he will send me ample means to start in business in a foreign land; but let me say, Harry, as it seems we must part, and you are right, for you will not be hunted down, as I will be, that I am now convinced that you were innocent of the charge against you, of stealing Radcliffe's money, and I am sure it was a game between him and Benton to ruin you, for I heard their testimony at my trial, so I advise you to get hold of them in some way, for they are still at the academy, and clear your name of dishonor."

"Calvin, I thank you for your kind suggestion, and I will do so if in my power."

"Once I can raise my head up before honest men, I will do all I can to get your pardon from the President for what you did for me, for I know I can bring more influence to bear to that end, when I tell my story."

"I saved Radcliffe's life once, but as he never spoke of it at the academy, I would not; but I laughed at his fright under fire, on one occasion when our vessel was chased by a pirate, and that made him my deadly foe; but you should have seen him dive down the companionway when a shot came over his head, for it was funny; but now we must part, for I'll feel anxious until I know you are on board the schooner."

"Write to Captain Mercer here, and send a letter in it to me, saying where you are."

"Good-by, and put this in your pocket, for you can pay me back any time," and Harry forced half of his money upon his friend.

"Now, captain, put me back upon the smack,

and I'll run back into the inlet and anchor, while you row Calvin out to the schooner. I'll go ashore when I drop anchor, and talk to your wife until you return and tell us he is safe."

Farewells were then said and Harry was placed on board the smack, which at once stood back into the inlet.

"Remember, skipper, you have not left your anchorage to-night, if you are asked to-morrow, and here is a fee to prove that you may expect most liberal payment," and Haphazard Harry called the skipper into the little cabin and handed him a hundred dollars, which made his eyes dance with delight.

"Here is a gold eagle for your boy too," he added.

Then he rowed ashore in the smack's skiff and found Mrs. Mercer awaiting the return of himself and her husband.

"Captain Mercer will soon be back, madam, for he went out to the vessel in waiting outside for Mr. Cole, for I did not wish my skipper to know too much," said Harry.

"Ah yes; but I thought he was to go in the smack."

"No, I changed the plan, when I found I could get him away in a vessel, and I shall remain here perhaps several days, as I have a little suggestion of Calvin Cole's to carry out, that I may clear my own name of dishonor," and had his foes seen the face of Haphazard Harry just then, they would not have liked the look that rested there, for it was ominous of evil to some one.

CHAPTER XXI.

HAPHAZARD HARRY SETS A TRAP.

It was two o'clock when Captain Mercer entered his cottage, and found his wife and Haphazard Harry awaiting his coming.

"Is he safe?" asked Mrs. Mercer in a whisper.

"Yes, and leagues away."

"Thank God! now I can go to bed and sleep content," and the good woman shed tears of joy, as she bade Harry good-night.

"You got him on board, captain?"

"Safe."

"And Captain Breeze?"

"Received him as he would a brother, told him he had a third mate's berth open for him, and gave him your state-room in the cabin."

"He spoke of me?"

"Oh, yes, and laughed when I told him you preferred not to come on board the schooner; but he said you were right, and he wished you luck, but if the world went back on you, you knew where to find him."

"I thank him most kindly."

"He sent you your luggage and this wallet of bills, which he says is honest money, so you need not fear to take it, for he found it on board the wreck of a brig that was drifting about the sea, sunk down to her decks amidships."

"One of his men found a trunk floating in the companionway, and this wallet was in it, and he sends it to you: and it's a good present, lad, for it contains twenty-five hundred dollars in bank-notes," and Mercer handed over the leather wallet.

"Captain, this bears the name of Mr. Lonsdale, as you see, and it was his brig the schooner found, while I remember the merchant said that he had neglected to take a wallet out of his trunk that contained twenty-five hundred dollars in bills, and some papers that were worth far more."

"Yes, all seem to be here, and I shall return it to the owner."

"Well, Harry, you can do as you please, but I think you are entitled to the bills."

"Not when I know to whom they belong; but the schooner sailed, did she, captain?"

"Oh, yes; and is leagues away."

"You think Calvin will take the berth of mate on board?"

"I guess so."

"I hope not—but he knows best," and Haphazard was silent for a while, and then said:

"I think we have covered up our tracks well."

"Indeed we have."

"No danger of being found out?"

"Not a bit, for Mr. Calvin said he left the cake cut, so as not to show it had contained anything, the files he brought with him, and the rope ladder was made of hemp you brought, so there is no trace, and if Ike lied yesterday in a tight place, he can again."

"The fact is, there's no one to suspect, and Bowdon may lose his place; but then he intended to give it up in a few weeks, for he's too tender-hearted for a jailer."

"Well, I intend to follow out the suggestions of Calvin."

"How so?"

"He spoke of my being able to prove I was not guilty of taking that money."

"Yes."

"I believe I can prove it, with your aid."

"I'll do all I can."

"Remember, what you and your men do for me, I have the money to reward you well for."

"I do not ask pay from you, Master Harry."

"No, but it is only just that I give it to you."

"Not to me; but you can pay the men if you wish, for any little work they may do."

"I wish eight of your men besides yourself, and I desire your wife to make me up for you all some black gowns, hoods and masks."

"Upon them I will try my hand at a little artistic work, in the way of painting a skull and crossbones, and then I'll be ready to act."

"What will you do?"

"I wish to get Charlie Benton and Ralph Radcliffe into my power, along with one of the professors of the academy and a student."

"What do you intend to do with them?"

"Try if I cannot get the truth out of Radcliffe and Benton, and have the professor and the other student there to be a witness of what is said and done."

"I hope you can do it, Master Harry."

"I can but try; but do you know the old deserted light-house on the beach beyond the academy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, that is where I wish you to have your men to-morrow night, and I will run outside in the smack and anchor, for I can land in the skiff."

"I will see that the professor and student go there, and they must be at once seized, and held until I come with my two men."

"Then we will see what Radcliffe and Benton have to confess," and Haphazard Harry looked really wicked.

As it was now but a few hours to dawn the youth and the smuggler sought their respective rooms and both were soon fast asleep, for each, in the service of Calvin Cole, felt that a good work had been done.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HAUNTED LIGHT-HOUSE.

THE morning broke bright and balmy, and all nature was smiling and beautiful under the coming of spring.

But the sun had hardly risen when Jailer Bowdon made a discovery.

It was that a rope stretched from a tree in the jail yard to the top of the high wall.

What it meant he did not know, but he ran to it, pulled on it, and a rope ladder came over.

It told the story of a prisoner's escape.

He glanced up to the widdows, and he saw in one two iron bars cut in two and bent out of place.

"Calvin Cole has escaped! I will suffer for it, but I am willing, for I never wished that splendid fellow to hang."

"Now to give the alarm, and I hope he'll not be taken."

He ran to the jail alarm-bell and rung it with all his might.

Its clear peals went out over the town and reached to the distant academy, and instantly there was great excitement.

Villagers and students began to hasten to the jail, and then the news became known, and often was heard the words:

"I'm glad he's gone!"

Constables were sent out to solve the secret, and a thorough search of the town and the surrounding country was begun.

But the hours passed on, and not the slightest clew could be found of the fugitive prisoner; yet the villagers stood about in knots, talking over the matter, and many of the academy students played truant to try and solve the mystery of the escape.

A reward was offered for the capture of the prisoner, and many expressed a desire to get it.

Among those were two young men who stood together, reading the written notice of the reward posted about.

One of the young men was a large-boned fellow, the other an effeminate-looking youth, and both wore the dress of the students at the academy.

"I tell you, Charlie, it would be nice if we could pocket that reward of a cool thousand, for the governor says I've been spending too much money and he has shut down on me for the balance of the year," said one.

"I guess it would be good for us, as I've had nothing from home for two months, and

need not expect much for the balance of the term, while, outside of getting the reward, I would like to see Cole hang, as I don't half like his being out, for he said we testified to injure him at his trial."

Thus the two talked on, until they were suddenly joined by a man in sailor garb.

"Mates, that's a sum to please the eye, now hain't it?" he said, alluding to the reward.

"Yes, it is."

"If I were sure of a leetle help I could make that money, I guess."

Both asked in a breath:

"Could you?"

"With a little help, lads."

"We will help you, or at least I will."

"And so will I."

"Sh—! Keep dark and follow me."

"Where?"

"Do you see yonder smack?"

"The one anchored in the inlet?"

"Yes."

"We see it; is he there?"

"You get you a boat, and pretend to be fishing, and drift alongside, just about dark."

"Then jump on board and come right down into the cabin."

"I'll be there, and so will somebody else."

"Calvin Cole?"

"You come and see; but don't bring any one else, for I'll be there, as I said, and we three will be enough."

"We'll get there on time," said one of the delighted youths, and the sailor, after giving a few more instructions left them, walking alone down the inlet shore.

It was twilight when he rowed out to the smack, and soon after the two youths came drifting down the tide in a boat.

They ran alongside of the smack, sprung on board, darted down into the cabin, and, quick as a flash the hatch over the companionway was closed and they were prisoners.

Then Harry locked the hatch, and the skipper and his boy arose from forward and began to get up anchor and set sail.

Half an hour after the smack, a swift sailer, was out of the inlet and heading along the coast.

The wind was off the shore and she kept in close, and after a run of a little over a league dropped anchor just off of an old stone tower, against which stood a small cabin.

It was the Haunted Light-house.

Opening the hatch Haphazard Harry, still in his disguise, and pistol in hand stepped into the cabin, and said sternly:

"Young men, you are wanted as witnesses in a certain case; but you must put these irons on and come with me."

"He's but one, Ralph, so—"

"Hold, Charles Benton, I am not alone! Ho, on deck, there!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" came the response of the skipper.

"Do you submit, or must I use force?"

They made no resistance, and, very pale, they held out their hands, and the handcuffs were slipped upon them, and fastened to a rope put about their waists.

Then they were blindfolded, and led out of the cabin to the boat.

The old skipper took the oars, and rowed the party ashore, and Haphazard Harry conducted the prisoners toward the Haunted Light-house.

"Halt!" he said, and they stood still, while he walked a short distance off to speak with Mercer, who came toward him.

"Well?" asked Haphazard Harry.

"I saw Professor Willis, sir, and told him just what you said, and asked him to get the student you named, Phil Caldwell."

"And he did so?"

"Yes, they are both in the cabin at the light house."

"And your men?"

"Are in the tower."

"Good! and in their masks, hoods, and gowns?"

"Yes, and they scare me to look at them."

"Well, you lead these prisoners in, and place them in front of your men, while you have Professor Willis and Phil Caldwell stand where they will not be seen."

"I'll fix them, and you get ready to do your little act at the right time."

"I will," and Haphazard Harry glided away, while Mercer led the two students into the Haunted Light-house.

"Where are you taking us?" asked Charlie Benton.

No answer was returned, and they were placed in the old tower, Mercer at once stepping to one side, and putting on his gown, hood and mask.

A dim light pervaded the place, from a lantern hung far above, and stepping before the two trembling youths, Mercer said, in a sepulchral tone:

"Charles Benton and Ralph Radcliffe, you stand in the Haunted Light-house, where you have been brought to face those who will know if you tell the truth to questions asked you."

"For your souls' sakes speak not falsely."

"Now you shall see what is before you."

The bandages were quickly slipped from over their eyes, and, in the weird light, they beheld eight black forms before them, hideous as death, and by their side the one who had addressed them.

Behind them, in the cabin, through the open door, stood Professor Willis and Philip Caldwell, whom Haphazard Harry had asked Mercer to bring to meet him there.

The two youths were terribly frightened and they showed it in their faces, as they gazed upon the black-robed forms, and about them at the crumbling old tower, and knew that they were in the Haunted Light-house.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CONFESSION.

"CHARLES BENTON, do you know one by the name of Harry Harwell?" asked Mercer, in the same sepulchral tones.

"I did!" hoarsely responded Benton.

"And you, Ralph Radcliffe, did you know him?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe him to be dead?"

"Answer, both of you!"

"Yes."

"You are aware of what killed him?"

"Yes."

"You would know his spirit if you saw it?"

They were silent.

"Answer me!"

"Oh yes," they fairly groaned.

"Behold it!"

At his words, into the tower, through a door behind the masked forms appeared a white-robed figure, the face whitened, unmasked, and the eyes gazing upon them.

"Oh! take it away!" cried Ralph Radcliffe, quivering with terror.

"Oh God, have mercy upon me!" groaned Charlie Benton.

Mercer waved his hand and the supposed spirit disappeared, gliding backward out of sight.

"Now, in the presence of that spirit, dare you speak falsely in replying to my questions?"

"No! oh no!" they cried.

"Ralph Radcliffe, did Harry Harwell steal your money?"

"No! oh no!"

"Charles Benton, did you see Harry Harwell open the desk of Radcliffe?"

"No! no!"

"You both spoke falsely then?"

"Yes."

"Was your money stolen?"

"No!"

"How did it come in that hole in Harwell's jacket?"

"I put it there! But, oh! how I have suffered for it, God only knows!"

"Harwell was playing ball, and had taken off his jacket, and I put the money there, for Radcliffe hated him, as I did, and we arranged the plot to ruin him."

"Is this true, Radcliffe?"

"It is—yes, every word of it."

"And your falsehood and treachery toward a fellow student caused the death of one poor fellow, Reuben Lang, and would have resulted in the hanging of Calvin Cole had he not escaped last night, and who I am sure never intended to strike a death-blow, and sent the victim of your hatred a wanderer about the sea, a scapegrace in the eyes of all, for he is not dead, as you guilty wretches believe, but here to face you; while here, also, are witnesses to your confession under the impulse of superstitious terror."

As Mercer spoke Haphazard Harry stepped into the tower, his face freed of powder, and without the sheet that had enveloped him, while at the same time the black gowns were thrown off by the smugglers, as they stood revealed as well-known fishermen of the village.

"Professor Willis, and you, Caldwell, I thank you," and Haphazard Harry grasped the hands of the professor and student who had been most friendly to him during his days at the academy.

"Harry, indeed I thank you for proving your innocence, and as for these guilty wretches, I will see that they are exposed in all they have done, and that you receive full justice," said Professor Willis, warmly.

"Captain Mercer and his men will escort the culprits to the academy for you, professor, to report them to the president, and let him do as he deems best; but I must be fully justified."

"As for Captain Mercer and his fellow-fishermen, I enlisted them in my service to clear the stain from my honor, and they have nobly seconded me; but now I must leave you for I have duties calling me elsewhere, and here you will have an address that will reach me, with my poor old father's, to whom I beg you to write, telling him all, for I have not had the heart to do so since I was accused, and *seemingly proven*, to be a thief."

A few more words before parting, and then while the professor started upon his return to the academy, accompanied by the culprits, their guards and Caldwell, Haphazard Harry retraced his steps to the shore, sprung into the waiting skiff, and boarding the smack, was soon skimming fleetly over the waters, his course laid for a little harborage not many miles from Boston and within view of the handsome country seat known as Lonsdale Manor.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN Haphazard Harry arrived in the harborage near Lonsdale Manor it was just before sunset, and dropping anchor he went ashore and soon reached the mansion.

The merchant sat upon the piazza smoking, and Nellie was swinging in the hammock near.

The reception that he met gladdened the heart of the poor youth, who had so long been considered a scapegrace, accused of a crime of which he was innocent.

To Mr. Lonsdale he gave his wallet, with the money and papers intact, and the delighted merchant told him that he had saved him a great many thousand dollars by the return of important documents in that pocketbook.

Then Harry told the merchant and Nellie the story of his life, leaving out nothing, from the death of his mother up to that time, and he was listened to with deepest attention.

At last the merchant said:

"Harry, my noble boy, you have deserved your commission in the navy, and I will go with you to Washington, see the President, and have him appoint you a midshipman."

"Then, in your uniform as such, Nellie and I will return home with you, and we'll make this disagreeable step-mother proud to own you as a step-son, with regret that you are not her own boy."

And Mr. Lonsdale kept his word faithfully, for he, Nellie and Harry sailed in one of the merchant's vessels to Baltimore, and from there they took the stage to Washington.

The President was an old friend of the rich Boston merchant, and he gave him a cordial welcome, heard the story of his young *protege* and readily gave him the appointment asked for.

After a week's stay the party left by ship for New York, and from thence took the stage to the Jersey village. Dan Rawlings was dumb with joy when he recognized his boy friend, whom he had long believed dead, and he dashed up to the inn door in the village with a whoop.

To portray the meeting between father and son, and of Harry with his subdued and repentant step-mother, would be impossible, so I leave it to the reader's imagination.

As for the town'speople, they gave the young middy a public entertainment, for it had leaked out that he had become a scapegrace at school, and they wished to redeem themselves for their unkindness in believing ill of him.

After a short visit at home Harry went to join his ship, and the war of 1812 soon after breaking out between England and the United States, he quickly added to his fame as a daring sailor and gallant officer.

It was also said that Captain Breeze turned the Night Bird into a privateer, and, being killed in an engagement with an English cruiser, that Calvin Cole became captain, and, by his gallant sea service for the United States, won fame under another name, for he could not tell his own with the shadow of the gallows hovering over him.

Duke Harwell never made a great man, for he "showed the white feather" in an engagement and left the service, to see his step-brother whom he had despised and helped to drive from his home, win honor and rank that no one would have believed could be won by Haphazard Harry, whom so many had looked upon as the scapegrace of the academy on the shores of the Atlantic.

THE END.

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